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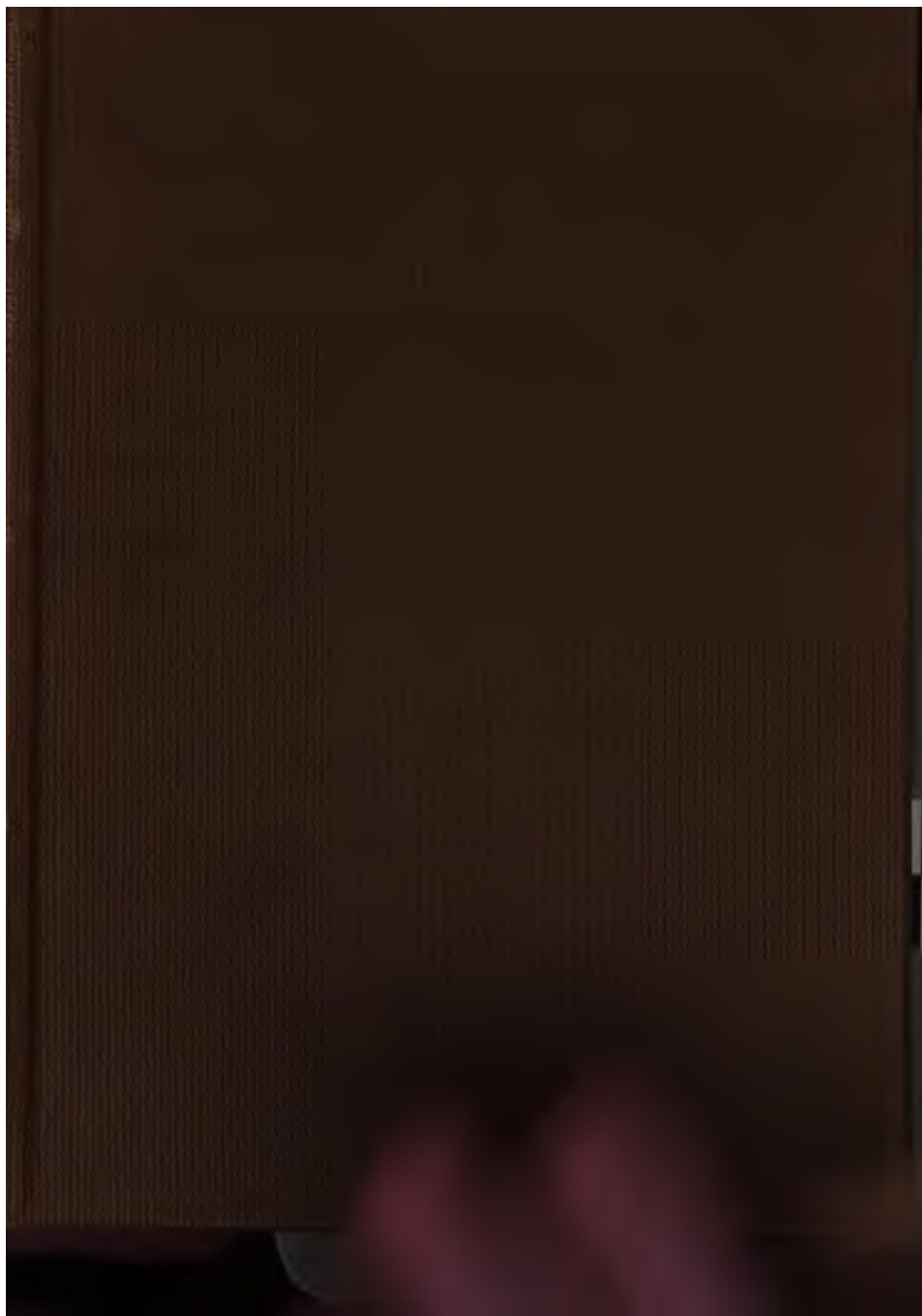
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The Beggars of Paris



Lady Herschell

THE BEGGARS OF PARIS

(PARIS QUI MENDIE)

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF M. LOUIS PAULIAN

BY

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EDWARD ARNOLD

LONDON

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70 FIFTH AVENUE

1897

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P R E F A C E .

I HAVE ventured to translate this book by M. Louis Paulian because it seems to me to be an eminently useful, as well as an interesting, work on a subject which is of no less moment in England than in France.

Here, as in France, begging is made a profession. And it is very important that the public should realize the fact, that 'thoughtless almsgiving, instead of relieving misery, promotes mendicity.'

The author of '*Paris qui Mendie*' speaks with the experience of one who has put the question of mendicity to a personal test, and who has beaten the beggar in the various branches of his own trade. No one therefore is a better authority on the subject, and M. Louis Paulian's experiences will, I am sure, be welcome in England.

Good work has been done in the direction indicated by M. Paulian by the Charity Organisation and Mendicity Societies, and as regards infant suffering by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but much remains to be accomplished. Professional beggars still abound in England, and too ready an ear is lent to their appeals.

A. A. H.

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THE BEGGARS OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW I WAS LED TO BECOME A BEGGAR.

TEN years ago, putting into practice advice often given by M. Jules Simon, I resolved upon an undertaking which, at first sight, did not seem to be a very complicated one.

I tried to ascertain the total sum which passes every year in Paris, by way of voluntary gifts, from the pockets of the so-called rich into the pockets of the so-called poor.

Do you comprehend the nature of this undertaking?

I left on one side the *Budget de l'Assistance Publique*, which is so important. I took no heed of all the sums voted by Parliament, the General Council of the Seine, or the Municipal Council of Paris, in aid of extreme destitution. I wished only to find the total amount given voluntarily to the poor, whether in the shape of a ten-franc piece, representing the subscription of a member of a charitable society, or ten centimes given to a beggar in the street.

It is now ten years since I began to make this calcula-

tion, and I have not yet been able to finish it, because not a week passes—scarcely, indeed, a day—in which I am not made aware of the existence of a new charitable society. Consequently, I find fresh figures before me to add to my sum.

And yet, if I were to conclude my calculations now, it would be easy to prove, particulars in hand, that the sum exceeds ten million francs—ten millions, renewed year by year, and which, as those who give it suppose, is destined to relieve misery in Paris.

It would seem that with this enormous sum, added to the fifty millions of the *Assistance Publique*, there ought not to be, I do not say one poor man—there will always be rich and poor, as there will always be people with intelligence and those of weak intellect—but one miserable being, deserving of pity, to whom society could not immediately give the necessary relief.

I do not know whether real destitution is greater to-day than it was fifteen or twenty years ago, but it is quite certain that the number of beggars who ask alms in the street from passers-by has never been so great. And so in proportion as the receipts intended to alleviate distress increase, the distress itself seems to develop. In face of this surprising fact, I find myself in the same situation as the engineer who, having constructed a channel to bring water from its source to a town, discovers with surprise, when his work is completed, that of all the water that rushes in full volume into one end of his conduit, only a few drops arrive at the town. 'Certainly it must have found a means of escape,' the engineer remarks. The same idea occurred to me, and during several years I have sought to find the leakage by which the water of Parisian charity runs out and is lost.

This leakage I believe I have found. My purpose is to make it known, and to propose a means of preventing it; for as long as the leakage exists, though private charity may do all in its power to fill the pipe, only a few drops of the beneficent water will arrive at their destination.

The leakage—as everyone can guess—is represented in the present case by those who feign poverty, by those who live upon what a writer* has charmingly called *paupériculture*, by those whom a Belgian magistrate† has termed the Aristocrats of Mendicity—by those, in fact, whom I call by their true name, ‘The robbers of the poor.’

It occurred to me that it would be well to study minutely these pretended poor. In order to do this, I began by interrogating competent authorities. I consulted the police officials who arrest beggars, the magistrates who convict them, the governors of gaols under whom the sentence is carried out, the members of the benevolent societies who assist them as they leave the prison, the almoners of all creeds who try to elevate them, the members of the charity boards, or of private charitable societies who afford them relief, and the doctors of the hospitals where they are cared for when ill.

I paid many visits to the Préfecture of Police, to the tribunal of the Seine, and to the house of detention. In a word, I have exhausted all the means of information which are at the disposal of a man who is inquisitive and determined to solve the problem he has set himself. This vast inquiry not having produced the result I expected, I decided to have recourse to personal experience, and just as I had before become a rag-picker

* M. Abraham Dreyfus.

† M. Gallet, juge de paix at Antwerp.

in order to study the habits of the rag-pickers, so one fine day I became a beggar to study the habits of the beggars.

Thanks to special protection—and why should I not acknowledge it?—thanks to certain subterfuges, I succeeded at the outset in getting myself officially inscribed at the Préfecture of Police on the list of organ-grinders and street-singers.

Then little by little, as my experience grew, I enlarged the circle of my acquaintances. I made friends for myself in the most questionable quarters. I frequented taverns of the lowest description, and, having finished my education, I was able during months together to trade with impunity on public charity in the streets of Paris.

By turns crawling cripple, blind, street-singer, carriage-door opener, mechanic out of work, unemployed professor, paralytic, deaf and dumb, I have had every infirmity, and have practised every kind of deceit.

Success always attended me, and once only was I molested by the police. That happened one day at noon when I was begging under the porch of the church of St. Germain-des-Près, and the policeman who then arrested me acknowledged directly afterwards that my arrest was entirely due to the exaggeration of my disguise.

The result of the personal inquiry I have alluded to is embodied in this book. I believe that its publication will be a really useful work.

My aim is both to expose an evil and to suggest a remedy. The majority of the Parisian press have approved of the campaign I have undertaken, and I thank them sincerely.

Some journals have, however, accused me of a want

of heart. They have alleged that I sought to dry up the sources of private charity, and that I *advised the citizens to keep their pence*. That is a mistake. I never said, 'Cease to give'; I say, 'Give differently.' If I may judge from the threatening letters which anonymous mendicants send me daily, I have every right to think that the remedy I propose will be efficacious. It is for my readers to judge.

CHAPTER II.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE POOR.

EVERYONE knows that the Articles from 274 onwards of the Penal Code punish mendicity. Begging is forbidden, and yet there is begging in every street. In 1828 M. Debelleyme, préfet of police, in a circular addressed to his commissioners, recommended them to apply the law with a perseverance equal to the persistence of the mendicants. Alas! the perseverance of the police has lamentably failed. On the other hand, the persistence of the mendicants has only increased; and we greatly fear that, in spite of all the praiseworthy efforts that have been made for some time by the préfet of police to repress mendicity in the public thoroughfares, in this struggle between the administration and the mendicants the latter have had the upper hand.

In fact, the police agents are in despair, and how can it be otherwise?

Three-fourths of the mendicants whom they arrest are set at liberty either at once by the prefecture of police or by the examining magistrate, or, if committed for trial, by the courts.

Ask a policeman why he does not take into custody that beggar on the boulevard who intercepts every passer-by, holding out his hand more persistently the more he receives. He would answer: 'I have already arrested him five times—nay, ten times, and he always begins again;' and the policeman is only telling the truth.

Does it follow that the police authorities or the courts are to blame? By no means. They are the victims of a condition of things for which they are not entirely responsible. They are powerless when they have to deal with the professional beggar, and they have not the means of helping those who are really in want, and who only beg when they are starving.

I have more than once witnessed the examination of mendicants who, after having been arrested in a public thoroughfare, and having been detained by a police commissioner, are sent to the house of detention of the préfecture. The magistrate or his subordinate proceeds with their examination, and it rests with this functionary to determine whether the culprit shall be immediately set at liberty, or whether he shall be committed for trial. The detention generally lasts for twenty-four hours; during that time the investigation has been completed. The magistrate has before him the papers relating to the accused, with the particulars of the case, the report of the agent who made the arrest, and the facts collected by the police. Then the beggar is brought in. He is an old hack. His name is Louis René Pasquer; he is sixty years of age, and has been fifty-four times convicted. Another is called Hubert Nicoleurdatt, sixty-eight years of age, with fifty-six convictions. Another, of the name of Cailloux, sixty-seven years old, has been convicted thirty-eight times.

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These are men who absolutely refuse all work, and who have always lived upon society. It is useless to preach to them; it is useless to try to find them work. Their mind is made up. Say what you will, do what you will, these wretched creatures intend to live without working; and they are candid enough to tell you so plainly. The *chef du deuxième bureau de la Préfecture de Police* has no option but to refer their cases to the courts, and they are condemned to the maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment. That is the severest penalty which can be imposed.

Here is another beggar. This time it is a woman. She acknowledges the facts alleged against her. She was begging at the time she was taken up. This is not her first appearance before the magistrate. She is there for the fourth, the fifth—ay, the sixth time. She does not deny it, but she proceeds to explain her position. She has three children; she is a widow, or she is deserted by 'her man.' She pleads that she is without work, and no one will employ her because of her three children. She is quite ready to accept any kind of employment that may be given her, and, finally, she has never been convicted. *Must she, then, go and throw herself into the Seine?* The magistrate examines the papers, and finds that all her assertions are accurate. This woman is honest and unfortunate. What is he to do? Is he to commit her for trial? If so, what will become of the three children, and what will become of the mother herself when she comes out of prison?

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Is he to set her at liberty, as he has already done five or six times? In that case who could doubt that the woman would be inevitably doomed to return to begging?

This is just one of those very numerous cases which daily torture the kind-hearted men at the Préfecture of

Police, who perform there the delicate functions I have just mentioned. One must see them at work to understand the numberless difficulties, the practical impossibilities, which arise to defeat their kind intentions. This woman's case, you would say, is rather one for the Assistance Publique than for a prison. Plainly it is so. But the Assistance Publique, which finds itself already overworked, is obliged to submit to definite rules in dispensing relief. It requires certain conditions of age, nationality, and domicile, and if our beggar does not fulfil those conditions, she will apply at the office of this great organisation in vain.

Oh! for an institution which would provide honest work, and which would receive anyone at any hour, whether men, women, or children, Frenchmen or foreigners, young or old. The Préfecture of Police could then say to that woman, 'Go to such a place. They will make you work—yes, and work hard; but in exchange they will give you and your children food and lodging—of the simplest, it is true; but you will be able to leave the institution when you have found work that is more remunerative.'

Unfortunately, as everyone knows, this kind of hospitable institution does not exist. There are very few charities which assist by offering work. Some only receive men, some only receive women or children. How are mothers to be separated from their children?

The head officer of the Préfecture of Police may procure immediate relief for this poor beggar—sometimes, indeed, helping her from his own pocket, for the fund at his disposal is very limited—and then set her at liberty; but in two days the gratuity will be spent, and the woman will appear again before the magistrate, who will in the end commit her for trial.

Go to the law courts, and you may witness a repetition of the same scene—I should almost call it the same drama, because, whatever may be the sentence pronounced by the court, it will lead to a final catastrophe.

Supposing the woman is acquitted, she will return to the public highway to beg. In this case the dénouement is only postponed. If, on the contrary, the woman is convicted, then harm is done—irrevocable harm, for this woman has three children, the youngest still in arms. There she is in prison with her child. During a fortnight or a month she suffers the penalty of the law in the worst possible company. She will live amongst thieves, forgers, and fallen women; and while she watches the infant at her breast wasting away, she will wonder anxiously what has become of her two other children whom she has left alone in the little lodging. Anxiety will give place to terror if those children are girls. At the end of a month the prison door is opened, and the poor woman comes out embittered against society, branded in the eyes of employers of labour, who henceforth will refuse to give her occupation, physically enervated, morally contaminated, without a farthing in her pocket, and perhaps without a single human being to help her.

Society reproached her for not working, and to correct her, instead of lessening her difficulties, it has augmented the number of obstacles which she will have to surmount before she can be in the way to do well.

Society believes it has done its duty. I do not share that opinion; and I will point out in the second part of this work the remedy which in my humble judgment is prescribed both by justice and by the interests of society.

I could multiply infinitely these examples, and prove that to-day in France the father of a family, ill and

overwhelmed with a number of children, the mother recovering from her confinement, with no strength to gain her living, the consumptive, the blind, and the old, are in many cases abandoned to themselves.

Society seems to say to them: I admit that you are not able to work—I am not in a position to help you, but I forbid you to beg and I would remind you that suicide is a crime in the sight of God.

And yet France is the most generous country in the world.

There is no country in which the rich better understand their charitable duties towards the destitute. Private charity exists in every form. It has a heart for every misfortune. It is endowed with gigantic resources; and yet it is powerless. Why is this? Just because the millions of francs which are distributed, instead of serving to relieve real want, are devoured by the false poor, who are thus enabled not only to live without working, but sometimes even to make a fortune with the money intended for the really destitute.

CHAPTER III.

STARTING A CAREER.

AN English bishop, who was a man of large heart and much common-sense, at the end of his career, and just before his death, addressing the friends who were present at that solemn hour, said: 'I do not think I can reproach myself with having ever given a farthing to a beggar in the street, but with the money which I thus saved I started useful works, which I urge you to continue by the same means.'

These simple words deserve to be remembered by all those who are occupied in repressing mendicity, for they suggest at once the evil and the remedy.

1 It annoys us to see the Paris streets full of beggars; we accuse the administration of weakness and of incapacity, while we fail to discover that all—members of Parliament, magistrates, municipal councillors, members of charitable societies, and private individuals—are doing as much as is humanly possible to encourage, develop, and subsidize mendicity.

To a passer-by, that poor, tattered creature shivering with cold and with chattering teeth, that poor mother who is seated under a porch nursing her child, that crawling cripple who with difficulty drags himself through the street, that epileptic who falls down in a fit before the door of a great hotel or of a well-frequented pastrycook's shop—all these beggars, in a word, who with beseeching voice implore your charity, seem to be miserable people who deserve pity and assistance. Undeceive yourselves, then. Ten times out of twenty these 'wretched people' are traders, who practise a profession, and a profession which is often lucrative.

I say profession, and I use the word designedly, for it would be an error to believe that in order to become a real mendicant, worthy of the name, you need do no more than stand with your back against a wall, and hold out your hand to those who pass you. That was the primitive beggar, when the art was in its infancy. But to-day mendicity, like all other professions, has made progress; and, just as there are elementary and finishing schools for every branch of human industry, so there are apprenticeship and finishing schools for those who wish to make a career in mendicity. The trade, too, is improving day by day, and the mendicants, who have

already in Paris their restaurants, their clubs, and their registry offices, will perhaps before long form themselves into a syndicate, so as to be able better to defend the interests of the corporation. And when that happens, they will not look in vain for someone who will come forward to defend before the public authorities what he will term their just rights.

‘If poverty is a “situation,”’ said Alphonse Karr, ‘mendicity is a “position”!’ Alphonse Karr was right, and to prove it I need only place before my readers different types of beggars to show how in the good town of Paris a ‘ne’er-do-weel’ may eat, drink, and sleep at his ease by practising the profession of begging.

I begin by introducing to you the recruit of this trade, a fine, powerfully built young man of twenty. He could work, but he is lazy and a drunkard; the discipline of the workshop or the manufactory is distasteful to him. Besides, to get into either a workshop or manufactory, to find work, he must seek it, he must bestir himself; he must be ready at times to accept very hard conditions; he must have pluck, and prove his goodwill. But pluck and goodwill are wanting in him, and work, instead of seeming a wholesome necessity, to which all men are subject, is a drudgery to be avoided at all cost. Do not trouble yourself to tell him that work elevates a man, that it brings him happiness, that it constitutes the only guarantee of his liberty and self-respect, and that there is no money more precious, more sacred, and that one treasures more than that which has been earned by hard labour. You will only waste your time, and not be understood.

More than once already, after having missed work on Monday and even on Tuesday also, this man has awoke on Wednesday weary, out of condition, and without a

farthing in his pocket. The employer to whom he has applied has refused to engage him, for the good reason that all intelligent and honest employers must prefer a sober, regular, efficient worker to one who, to use a slang expression, *a un poil dans la main*; that is to say, objects to working. At noon this idler goes to the public-house for his mid-day meal, but the public-house keeper, who knows his customer, and who has long waited for the payment of an old account, seeing that the man, instead of bringing an instalment of his debt, comes to ask him to add to it, refuses point-blank to give him food. It is in vain that the fellow insists; it is in vain that he promises to mend his ways by beginning to work, and that he will bring the full amount of the money due within a fortnight. The public-house keeper knows better than anyone else the value of these drunken promises.

‘For two months,’ says he, ‘I have already allowed you credit. Every fortnight I have had to threaten you to get you to pay a small instalment. That is at an end. I prefer losing what you owe me to continuing to have to do with such a customer. The day before yesterday you received a fortnight’s wages, and instead of coming to settle your account here, you spent all your pay at another public-house. To-day you have not a penny left, and you are hungry—all the worse for you! I tell you, you shall have nothing more on credit. I have said it, and said it once for all. You can go away.’

I have witnessed such a scene as this more than once. You will say it is of no importance. But you are mistaken—greatly mistaken. The scene may be described in a sentence. ‘Here is a man overboard.’ When at sea the terrible cry is heard, ‘A man overboard!’ every

one vies with his neighbour in courage and sometimes heroism in trying to rescue the comrade who is battling with the waves. From all sides friendly hands are stretched out to the shipwrecked mariner. In this case, however, no one will come to the rescue of the drowning man. It is for him, and him alone, to get himself out of his difficulties.

Yes; the refusal of the public-house keeper to harbour any longer a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, is, for this man, nothing short of a shipwreck, for, remember, the public-house keeper is the last to lose all patience, and, before taking advantage of him, the workman spoken of has taken advantage of his parents, his friends, his employer, and everyone else. The public-house keeper alone has remained faithful to him; and this fidelity has lasted only so long as he hoped to realize some profit. But now this hope has vanished. Our workman is decidedly a bad customer, who gives more trouble than he brings profit, and the public-house keeper turns him out of the house.

Once more I repeat: Here is a man overboard. How shall he escape from the catastrophe? With courage and fortitude this drowning man might reach the shore, raise himself, and return to work. Unfortunately, ten times out of twenty, instead of appealing to such noble sentiments, he prefers to take his chance in another line.

He finds himself at two o'clock in the afternoon hungry and without money, and perhaps without shelter. 'Why,' he argues, 'should I not try begging?' What! you, at the age of twenty! You are strong, you possess your ten fingers, and *you* would go and beg? The idea will perhaps bring the blood to the man's face. This is a critical moment. A struggle takes place in the depths

of his conscience. If he rises victorious from the struggle, he is saved ; if he succumbs, he is lost for ever. The unfortunate man succumbs. Watch him. He passes quickly through the well-frequented streets, and directs his steps to the Bois de Boulogne. He seeks deserted avenues, looking anxiously round him like one who is contemplating a crime. He scrutinizes the faces of the passers-by. Suddenly he accosts one of the people he meets on the road, probably a woman or an old man. He takes off his cap, and with shame holds out his hand, saying in an embarrassed voice, ' Madam, sir, I am a labourer out of work. I am hungry—give me a piece of bread.' The lady passes him without giving anything. The gentleman answers, perhaps, ' You lazy fellow, are you not ashamed to beg at your age ?' This is a hard word, and yet it may prove a blessing, for sometimes it will act like a lash of the whip, under which the exhausted horse makes a last effort.

But our man has felt the insult without flinching. He has gone on his way, and has held out his hand to ten, twenty, thirty people, and has received alms. You may well pity him, for that man is lost, he is drowned ; it is all over with him. He is only twenty, and to the end of his days he will live at the expense of others.

The critical moment is passed ; all the efforts you may make to raise him will be futile. Society counts one beggar more, and all you who work have another mouth to fill at your cost.

The next day, as you may well suppose, it is not to a workshop that our friend will direct his steps. What is the use of working when one can get money without fatigue ? A man who has held out his hand and received alms is like one who has taken some lottery tickets and gained a prize. Both are lost, because both

are on the road that leads to an abyss. Both have forgotten that the only way to live, and even get rich, is to work. So this man has enrolled himself in the corporation of beggars. But he does not yet understand the trade. He is ignorant of its 'tricks.' He will have to begin at the beginning and *tirer le pied de biche*.

Tirer le pied de biche means to pull the bell-rope in rather isolated quarters, where the bell-handle is often a hind's foot. Our apprentice will make his début at Neuilly, for instance.

After choosing a street, he wanders down it, ringing at all the doors. 'I am a poor workman without work,' he mumbles, 'and have had nothing to eat for two days.' In these unfrequented streets, houses have not always a concierge. It is the cook who opens the door, and the cook has a kind heart. She is all the more generous as she does her charity with her master's money. She gives a penny, or a piece of bread, or some scraps of meat. In the course of a morning our beggar will have rung at two hundred doors, and—as statistics (of which we shall speak later, and which have the more weight as they are the work of the beggars themselves) show that there is 'a good door in every four'—for every two hundred doors at which our beggar rings he will have received alms at fifty, either in money or kind. By about two o'clock the day is over.

With the bread and the meat he can make a good enough breakfast, and with the twelve or fifteen pence produced by this begging from house to house he will go and spend the evening in some low place of entertainment in the Rue des Anglais, or the Rue Sainte-Marguerite, where on fivepence worth of *casse poitrine*, or of *tord-boyaux*, our man can easily get drunk, while in a well-warmed hall he is a spectator of a variety enter-

tainment, in which strolling singers, wonderful women, and fortune-tellers take by turns the first part. Towards midnight our beggar will retire to rest in a lodging, where he will lose no time in making the acquaintance of a comrade who will perhaps become his partner and bring into the business his local knowledge, his protection and his influence.

The next day they will begin again in another quarter. If it happens to be a wide avenue in one of those streets where the houses have six stories and are guarded by a concierge, 'the work' must be somewhat altered. Here it is useless to ring the bell, for the concierges are quick in distinguishing a beggar from a needy person, and are not easily taken in. What is to be done? It is very simple: instead of ringing at the doors of houses, they go into the shops. Look at that beggar who walks zig-zag, crossing the street continually. He visits all the bakers, and all the butchers, begging 'a piece of bread for God's sake.' How could a baker's wife, whose shop is filled with bread of all shapes and sizes, or a butcher who displays in his shop-front joints of beef and legs of mutton, refuse a piece of bread or a penny to an unfortunate man who pretends he is dying of hunger, whose expression is not always reassuring, and who in a day of riot might very well remember the refusal he had met with? After all, that small charity will not cost them much. The baker has adopted the habit of adding it in advance to the customer's bill; for a long time now in Paris the two-pound loaf has weighed only 900 grammes. It is you and I who pay in advance for the beggar. As to the butcher, he repays his generosity by adding a little more coarse meat to your broth. So you see that an *Avenue* day is worth quite as much as a day of the 'door-bell ringing.'

A father often goes out begging with one or two children. He stands under an entrance porch with some empty bags. The children, with a basket on their arms, go begging from shop to shop. When the basket is full they empty it into the bags, and set to work again. At the end of some hours the bags overflow, and the bread you believe has gone to appease some poor child's hunger, who pretended not to have eaten since the previous day, is sold to breeders of chickens and rabbits, and to the coachmen of middle-class families, who use it to give a showy appearance to their master's horses.

At the end of six weeks our beggar will have ended his apprenticeship; now he passes as a journeyman. The moment has arrived for him to choose his line of business. His foot is on the ladder, and he has entered upon a career. It is for him to choose between *active* and *sedentary* service—that is to say, to become a strolling beggar, or a beggar stationed at a fixed place.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACTIVE SERVICE.

Active service, as the name sufficiently indicates, consists in begging at people's houses; sedentary service, on the contrary, obliges those who choose it to select a good spot at some point on a public thoroughfare, and to stay there to the end of their lives.

In the first case the beggar goes to seek a client; in the second he waits for him, after placing himself in his path. Active service demands youth, intelligence, and often instruction, and to succeed in the trade one must

know not only how to lie shamelessly, but also to preserve an impassive countenance, and always to act one's part.

While the uninitiated beggar will ring at every door, the old hand only rings at the likely doors—at those where he is certain to succeed; for, remember, this beggar is a trader, and to him 'time is money.'

But it is not sufficient to know the likely doors; he must also know how to make the best possible use of them. That is the art. No doubt, if you ring at a good door, the cook or the footman will give you the habitual gratuity—a penny or a piece of bread—but if you know how to evade the eye of the concierges, and by stepping past the servants to reach the masters and interest them in your 'wretched condition'—why! then the trade becomes lucrative, for it is no longer pence, but francs and sometimes pieces of gold that you reap.

To interest the citizen in his 'wretched condition' is the difficult problem that has to be solved. Here we see the first perfected wheel of that great machine, which, under the name of mendicity, aims at exploiting the kind public. This wheel is 'the big game' and 'the little game.' Here we are before a fine mansion. The proprietor of this mansion is no doubt a well-to-do man who will not refuse a gratuity to a poor wretch. But, says the beggar to himself, if I could find out this man's weak point, I should certainly deal with him more easily. To present one's self in the Rue de Lille at the house of a clerical reactionary, whose estate was destroyed by the Commune, and to say to him 'I am a former Communist; I was transported to New Caledonia; I have letters in my pocket from the late Felix Pyat, whose friend I was,' would not be a good way of starting the business. But to appear before this same reactionary

in the guise of a good father of a family, who committed a fault in his youth, and who wishes to repair it by legalizing a union that the Church has not blessed would probably be the means of gaining a better reception.

Beggars who are philosophers have realized and have said to themselves that just as there is a *bottin* for men of commerce and a *tout-Paris* for men of the world, it would be very useful to have an almanack of addresses for the mendicant's use. This new kind of *bottin* has been started under the title of 'the little game' and 'the big game.' The 'little game' costs three francs; it gives you the names and addresses of some hundreds of charitable people. The 'big game' costs six francs; naturally it is more complete. Not only does it contain a larger number of addresses, but to each name is added a small biography. The name and address of the charitable person, the hour at which one may call, his religion, political opinions, habits—nothing is forgotten.

Thanks to this valuable book, the beggar's part is much simplified; for he can ascertain even the small peculiarities of the person at whose door he is going to knock, and how he should present himself. Let us open the 'big game' at random; this is what we read:

'Mr. A.—Rich proprietor; readily gives a five-franc piece; pays the rent if one is ejected.'

'Mr. B.—Never gives money; ask for clothes.'

'Mrs. C.—Widow; only concerns herself about children. Ask for a layette for the baby and some linen for the mother. One can also obtain a ticket for *sealed* milk for the baby by saying it is ill.'

'Mr. D.—Religious house; is interested in legalizing irregular marriages; favours baptisms and first communions. Get yourself reclothed from head to foot.'

'Mr. E.—Protestant; dresses children to send them

to school; gives tickets for shoes and clothes; demands the beggar's address, and sends for particulars. Arrange with a friend to give the address of an honest house.'

'Mr. F.—Old radical republican; very rich; one may describe one's self as a victim of the reactionaries and clergy.' Etc., etc.

With this key the problem is soon solved. Our beggar will call in the Rue de Lille, *cleanly* but *miserably* dressed, and as soon as he is in the presence of the master of the house he will tell his story with imperturbable confidence.

A professor, an ex-mendicant retired from business, has previously given him some lessons, and has taught him the *tone* to use in reciting his part.

The man has profited by his lesson, for the pupil recites as well as his master. He says he has not come with any intention of asking alms; 'thank God, his work suffices to make both ends meet, if nothing unusual happens.' Unfortunately, just at this moment he is in a difficulty, and it is precisely because of that difficulty that he has come to 'ask advice of Mr. X., whose kind-heartedness is well known in the neighbourhood. That is all.'

And our beggar tells how he has a wife and two children, and how happy he is in his home; but the union has not been blessed by the Church, any more than it has been sanctioned by the Mairie. He wishes to make this state of things, which troubles him, regular, and to have a word of recommendation for Monsieur le Curé, who, besides his blessing, will procure for him the necessary clothes that he may appear decently in church.

This story has its variations. Sometimes there are children who have not been baptized. 'Oh, it is not a

want of religion ; it is misfortune that has caused this. A baptism is expensive. A robe is necessary for the baby and some clothes for the parents ; besides, on that day one does no work ; and it is the custom to invite the godfather and godmother, if not to breakfast, at least to drink a glass and break a crust. In a word, one is obliged, if one has any proper pride, to do things decently, or not to do them at all. Therefore a poor workman cannot afford the luxury of a baptism.'

The charitable and religious gentleman who listens to this tale is naturally touched ; he praises the unfortunate workman for his worthy sentiments. ' I will,' he says, ' at once attend to you and your children. You will receive a visit from a priest who is a friend of mine. Do not worry yourself about clothing ; my wife and daughters will dress your children. Meanwhile, here is something for you.'

The next day a servant rings at the door of the poor lodging where our beggar lives. He brings a layette for the baby and some old clothes for the parents. A five-franc piece accompanies the present.

The curé arrives some seconds later . . . and finds the house empty. The honest father of the family is proceeding to drink away the layette, the clothes, and the five-franc piece. Sometimes, however, he plays his part to the end, and takes his children to church. One day in ' la Femme en Culotte ' at Clichy I was talking with an old rag-picker, who described to me the efforts that were being made by the good curés and worthy pasteurs to evangelize the population of that slum.

' Every Monday,' said the rag-picker, ' we receive a visit from a gentleman in a long frock-coat. He gives books to the children, and asks us to have them baptized in the Protestant Church. Saturday is the day for

M. le Curé and the good nuns, who distribute pictures and bon-bons amongst the children. The nuns urge us to have our children baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.'

'And who,' I ask, 'has the most success amongst you—the curé or the pasteur?'

'That depends upon the parents, sir.'

'And your own children, have they been baptized in the Catholic or Protestant Church?'

This is a direct question, and the woman hesitates a minute; then in a somewhat careless tone:

'To tell you the truth,' she answers, 'my child has been twelve times baptized in the Protestant and fourteen times in the Catholic Church!' And as I seemed surprised at this avowal, the woman, by way of explanation, adds: 'The winter has been so severe, sir. Every baptism brings me in twenty sous and a clean dress.'

The baptism trick is one of the most productive; but there are many others. The 'big game' will indicate them; it is for the beggar to know how to work them. We find there, for instance, *the rent trick*.

Some night in January, when there are ten degrees of frost and your drawing-room is well warmed, a woman, in floods of tears, presents herself at your house. She is the mother of a family, has four children, her husband has just come out of a hospital, and she shows you a hospital ticket on which you read, 'Fracture of the right leg.' This husband—oh, he is an excellent workman!—but he fell from a scaffolding, and he was not insured, and his employer has not given him anything. With this incident misery entered the lodging. They have sent everything to the pawnshop, and this very night the landlord will turn the mother and children out of doors unless he gets ten francs.

You ask the woman where she lives; without hesitation she indicates her street and number. That street always happens to be at the other end of Paris. If you live in the Champs Elysées the beggar lives at Vincennes, and if you reside at Vincennes she lives at Courbevoie.

You give your ten francs; the next day you send to inquire, and learn that the woman and children are unknown at the address given. As to the hospital ticket, they can get as many of them as they please for about two francs at the wine-shops in the neighbourhood of the hospital.

Then there are the beggars who trade upon professors and schools. They call at all the free schools, and are capable of hunting out a professor living on the fifth floor of an almost empty house.

To play this trick, a certain amount of education is necessary; but amongst beggars there is no lack of 'Bohemians.'

I have known some graduates who lived by this craft. The essential thing is to wear worn-out linen, and to be dirty enough to make it impossible for anyone to propose to employ you. The headmaster, the professor, to whom he applies, never refuses twenty sous to aid an unfortunate brother.

There is now on the Paris streets a young man who alleges that he is a graduate, and who goes to call at the houses of all men of letters. He leaves an envelope with the concierge, and says he will call for the answer in the evening. The envelope contains a letter and a piece of poetry—some verses which are, in truth, far from bad. In the letter the poet complains that he is hungry, and begs you to leave with your concierge 'a simple piece of bread, which will be received with gratitude and devoured with delight.'

Here is the letter :

' PARIS, November 8, 1887.

' SIR,

'Hunger brings me again to your door. Not wishing, however, to abuse your kindness, which is extraordinary, I shall not again take the liberty of asking for money—a simple piece of bread will be received, and eaten likewise, with enthusiasm. Will you be kind enough to have it left with the concierge, on whom I will call again this afternoon ?

'You will find enclosed some original verses, which, of course, only read if you have leisure and inclination. If you find them at all tolerable, it will be so far hopeful.

'Deign to accept my respects, with which I have the honour to be, sir,

' Your very grateful servant,

' GUSTAVE M——.

' 52, RUE DE LÉVIS, HOTEL NORMAND.'

The verses begin thus :—

PANEM NOSTRUM.

' En Octobre dernier longeant le Parc Monceau
J'ouis un grand concert près de la pièce d'eau
Dix mille exécutants, chiffre imposant, ce semble
Enlevaient un Tutti d'un merveilleux ensemble.'
Etc., etc., etc.

You will say, perhaps, that to write two hundred lines in verse for a piece of bread seems to you a hard lot. But it is not so. To begin with, the verses are always the same. The poet contents himself with making many copies, and taking them to different addresses; and, then, too, he knows *by experience* that it is but rarely that the man of letters, at whose door he has just called, will merely give the piece of bread for which he has asked, and leave it with the concierge.

Men of letters have hearts. Many of them have known life's difficulties before reaching a fortune, or even a condition of ease. Every one of them will give money instead of bread—often it will be a piece of gold—and their kindness will go so far as to return the poet his manuscript.

If I may judge from the condition of the specimen which I now hold in my hand, these verses, before reaching me, must have been read by more than one man of letters, and must have brought no little money to their author.

Sometimes the beggar will work on a large scale. He arrives at a furnished apartment with his wife and two or three children. His luggage consists solely of paper, pens, and ink, the 'big game' and an autograph list of all the marriages that are to be celebrated during the week. Then he sets to work. He writes, or rather he copies out a series of letters, in which he solicits your charity.

Letters intended for Protestants end with these words: 'Your brother in Jesus Christ.' Letters intended for Roman Catholics contain a *postscript* assuring you 'that a poor destitute one prays for you, and for the repose of the souls of all who are dear to you.'

It is not a bad plan, for the beggar's wife and children, each armed with a certain number of letters, 'do the district.' At night all the family meet again in a lodging in a neighbouring district. If the result has been good, they rest for some days; if it has been bad, they begin again the next day. At times the beggar works specially for the newly married. Such is the case with one named Désiré G., whose repertory contains as many acrostics as there are Christian names in the Roman calendar.

If his autograph list of marriages announces the

engagement of a Miss Margaret X., immediately Désiré G. sends her on a pretty sheet of pink paper, ornamented with flowers and doves, the verses in his catalogue answering to the word Margaret.

HOMAGE TO MADEMOISELLE MARGARET C.

‘Gracieuse hirondelle, aimable messagère,
Va vers les fiancés, et, leur cachant mes pleurs,
Porte leur ce bouquet sur ton aile légère.’
Etc., etc., etc.

MARGUERITE. (ACROSTIC.)

‘Ma plume heureuse et fière en chantant vos louanges
Avec un doux plaisir vous transmet tous mes vœux
Recevez-les, de grâce, et sous l’aile des Anges
Guidez toujours vos pas dans les sentiers heureux.
Un époux va bientôt partager votre vie ;
En lui mettez toujours votre âme et votre cœur ;
Rien n’est si doux qu’aimer et tout vous y convie
Il faut que cet hymen vous donne le bonheur ;
Tenez, en me lisant, n’en soyez pas moqueuse,
Eh bien ! je vous prédis que vous serez heureuse.’

DÉSIRÉ G.

In the evening, when Mademoiselle Marguerite X. receives her friends at the Lemardelay restaurant, or at the Hôtel du Louvre, she will be handed the visiting card of the complimentary poet, who comes to claim his gratuity. It is the time of champagne ; all are merry ; dancing will soon begin, and do you think the fiancée will refuse a small donation to a poor poet who ‘hides his tears,’ and who predicts that she will be happy ? That would be to reckon without human nature and without superstition. ‘My dear,’ the fiancée will say to her future husband, ‘we must give something to this poor man, who is perhaps hungry. That will bring us happiness.’ So they give ten francs to the poet, who, getting back into his trap, hurries to the neighbouring

restaurant, where he has a Joséphine or an Adélaïde to compliment.

I know a complimentary poet whose office resembles a homœopathic chemist's shop. On all sides against the walls are small drawers, and on the drawers, instead of the name of the medicine is the name of some saint or other. In every drawer is a little provision of acrostics, all ready for use. 'You see, sir,' the beggar said to me one day, 'in our trade unforeseen things happen, one must always be ready beforehand. No doubt there are names, such as Mary, Margaret, which come more often than others. But every name is wanted sooner or later, and if I had not some Cunégonde, Perpétin, Monique, and Pétronille, written out beforehand, I should in a busy time, such as a Saturday, risk losing my gains.' By taking care to keep his stock of acrostics always complete our man never misses his fee.

But it is not only the fiancées who believe that giving to a beggar will bring good luck to themselves—all those, too, who are under the influence of deep emotion conform to the same superstition. Beggars know it well. Go to the Sorbonne when the bachelor's degrees are given, at the moment when the young students, the dictionary under their arm, are going to make some famous Latin verse, on the success of which all their future depends; a swarm of beggars bears down upon them. 'A penny, sir; a piece of bread—it will bring you good luck.' If the student passes without giving anything: 'You will be plucked, sir.' This sinister prediction always produces its effect: the student takes a penny from his pocket and gives it to the beggar.

At the Hôtel de Ville on the days of examination for certificates the same thing is repeated. Here the

return is always good ; the kind mothers of families are so overcome ! And when there are no examinations, what do the beggars do then, you will ask. They go to the races and trade upon the gamblers there. 'A half-penny—it will bring you luck, sir.' The gambler is even more superstitious than the youth, and in order to get good luck he gives alms.

All their methods are excellent for moving you to pity ; there are some beggars who, during an epidemic of small-pox, croup, or whooping-cough, call at houses where they know there are small children, and say : 'I live close by. My child has just died of croup ; give me a sheet to bury it in.' It is quite certain that the poor mother, who at the mere mention of croup trembles for her own children, will not go to see whether the man is speaking the truth. She will hasten to give an old sheet and to shut her door again.

To find all these means of cheating the public they need only consult the 'big game,' which, as I said, costs but six francs, and which is always up to date ; for the man of genius who devised this original *bottin* understood that it must necessarily be kept up to date, and he entrusted this work to the beggars themselves. Each time that a beggar has discovered the address of a charitable person who gives donations and whose name does not figure in the 'big game,' he brings it to the administration of the mendicants' *bottin*, which at once enters it in the list, and gives fifty centimes to the informant. And thus it is that in the good old town of Paris the beggars, whose lot moves many to pity, know well how to live at our expense.

CHAPTER V.

THE SEDENTARY SERVICE.

ACTIVE service, as its name sufficiently indicates, demands a certain amount of labour ; one must be always on the move, must come and go, change one's quarters, often do the tourist, and cover several miles. That is a régime which does not please everybody. Not a few mendicants, therefore, after having finished the apprenticeship of the trade, adopt by preference the *sedentary service*—it is less tiring, and at times exceedingly lucrative.

Amongst the beggars in the sedentary service we must begin with those on the *retired list*. These are the clever ones of the corporation : they are persons who, by dint of intrigues, lies, and pretences, have succeeded in exciting the pity of a certain number of families, of charitable societies, of associations, and thus procuring for themselves subsidies, which by their regularity and importance constitute very good incomes. There is nothing more curious than the budget of one of these beggars. Everybody contributes to the receipts except the beggar, who contents himself with spending them.

The charitable society furnishes bread. The *curé* or the *pasteur*, sometimes both at once, give soup ; the school fund clothes the children ; the dispensary supplies the household linen ; the society for providing lodgings pays the term's rent ; the nuns see that they have small luxuries ; college students and polytechnic pupils, members of the Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, well-to-do families of the district, big commercial houses, newspapers, organizers of charitable entertainments, the

mayor, the préfet, the Minister of the Interior, members of Parliament, supply them with money.

I know of some mendicant families who in a single day receive more than ten or twelve visits from charitable persons or from delegates of philanthropic societies, all of whom come well laden with gifts.

Visit one of those dwellings, make a police raid upon it, search the furniture, and you will be astonished to see with what admirable genius they have turned to their own account public charity, which is so generous in Paris. Look at that cupboard in front of you. It is, they tell you, the cupboard which contains the children's few clothes. Do not rely upon their words; open the cupboard, pull out the linen, ransack every little corner, and you will not be long in discovering the secret hiding-place.

What a marvellous provision of tickets of all kinds, of papers, of printed matter, of letters, meets your eyes! Tickets for cooking utensils; tickets for bread; tickets for milk; tickets for chocolate, given by Messrs. Rothschild; letters from members of Parliament, announcing the allotment of a grant from the public funds, designed for *extreme destitution*; letters from the commissioner of police, from the pasteur, from the curé, from the rabbi, giving the addresses of charitable persons, letters from the charity office, a list of all the charitable entertainments for the month, a memorandum of the marriages announced, and of the restaurants at which the wedding-breakfasts will take place.

In truth, those beggars are thoroughly cognisant of the resources of Parisian charity, and can tell you much better than the manager of the Publique Assistance how a clever beggar can live and become a capitalist without either working or infringing the penal code.

How cleverly they turn to account the slightest infirmity! If a child be rickety or scrofulous, what a windfall! That child will serve to excite the pity of visitors, and will ensure an abundance of bottles of wine and good meat.

Is the woman particularly thin and shrivelled? That, too, is a quality that must be turned to account. She will devote herself to begging in omnibuses; the business is lazy, little fatiguing, and has the advantage of presenting no danger. Even if the police commissioner himself were to get into the omnibus, his presence would not in any way act as a check upon this little trade. Indeed, if the law forbids begging, it does not forbid either sighing or crying, and the omnibus-beggar does nothing else. She begins with a sigh; you look at her and naturally you notice her wrinkles and her pallor. You say to yourself, 'That woman cannot be very happy.' You look at her more attentively; she notices it; she sees that the critical moment has arrived, and lets fall a tear. Your heart is touched. You discreetly lean forward and ask: 'Are you suffering, madam?' 'Ah! yes, sir. I have had no work for three weeks. Some was promised me this morning at the shop of the Louvre. I spent my last sixpence in paying the omnibus, for I cannot walk, as my legs are swollen,* and they told me that this week they had no work to give me. Yes, I am very miserable.' You put your hand into your pocket and take out a silver coin, while four or five other people follow your example, and the trick is played.

If you were to consult the old conductors of the line between the Hôtel de Ville and the Porte-Maillot, they

* False beggars generally represent their infirmity as one which cannot be verified.

would tell you what a lucrative game that is in the journey from the Champs Elysées.

No doubt to play this rôle you must start with an appearance that will lend itself to the part. But all infirmities can be made use of. An arm missing, a wooden leg, a rupture, varicose veins—these are all, to the clever beggar, capital that can be made productive.

A beggar friend of mine, who has greatly helped me in my nocturnal searches through the slums of Paris, said to me one day: ‘My neighbour is in luck; he has his military medal, a rupture and varicose veins.’

‘What! is he an old soldier?’

‘Oh dear no!’

‘How, then, has he got the military medal?’

‘Why, sir, a rupture and varicose veins!’

Do you still not understand me? Well, I will explain the puzzle. The military medal brings the soldier who possesses it an income of one hundred francs. In the mendicant world, ‘to have the military medal’ means to have an income of one hundred francs. It is a question of making this income by means of a rupture and varicose veins. Do you take it in? Not yet. Are you not aware that in the Paris hospitals they furnish gratuitously truss bandages and elastic stockings for those suffering from varicose veins? The beggar, by giving false addresses, is enabled to present himself at various Paris hospitals, at each of which elastic stockings and truss bandages are given him. On coming out of the hospital he goes to a secondhand dealer, who buys the stockings from him for five and the bandages for four francs. What is more, the certificate itself, stating that the man has a rupture, easily finds a purchaser also. It is an asset which generally sells at two francs, and which is in much request by strolling beggars.

The orthopædic apparatus, in spite of being stamped with the mark of the Assistance Publique, will find a purchaser none the less easily, and I could cite a specialist of C——r Street who offers for sale in the front of his shop a series of bandages and elastic stockings that have come from hospitals and bear the stamp of the Assistance Publique.

There are in Paris, besides the Croix Rouge and the Assistance Publique, several charitable societies which provide mechanical arms and legs for the maimed. The most important of these private societies is the Assistance to the Maimed Poor, whose secretary and founder is the Comte de Beaufort. These societies, no doubt, do a great deal of good, but, for want of a general understanding amongst themselves, they are at times shamefully abused. I know some beggars, who have lost an arm or leg, who get mechanical apparatus given them worth fifty or sixty francs and then sell them for ten or twelve francs at a secondhand shop. I could tell you of a telegraphist who, during the lapse of a single year, has sold, secondhand, six jointed arms.

If the societies would adopt the plan which I suggest in the second part of this work, they would avoid these trickeries, and would render frauds impossible.

Medicines, too, distributed in the hospitals after gratuitous consultations are very often sold by the sick people, who willingly exchange half a pint of cod-liver-oil for a glass of absinthe.

For some time past the Assistance Publique, made aware of this traffic, has been more chary of its gifts.

For instance, it gives scarcely any more quinine wine—wine which the sick person immediately transformed into *Amer Picou*; but it still gives a series of tickets for alkaline or sulphurous baths. These tickets are

very much sought after by really sick people, modest poor, the wretched ones in faded frock-coats, with too much self-respect or too feeble to stand in a line during two or three hours before hospitals, who prefer buying the tickets, at a reduction, at the wineshop, where the beggar has himself exchanged them for two pints, at fourteen sous. Six tickets sell for two francs. The old hospital doctors are well aware of it, and they try to put an end to this abuse by turning the 'professionals' out of the house.

If, from curiosity, you had been present during the late Dr. Desprès' visit to the Charité, you would have seen how he received the beggars for bath tickets.

'Ah! you wish to have some baths. I know you; you will not deceive me a second time. It is in the Rue Jacob that you sell your tickets; I know your game. Be off with you!'

The sick person hurries off in search of a doctor less clear-sighted. It is certainly not to Dr. Desprès that he will present himself. Dr. Desprès is well versed in the subject of mendicity; he knows *the tricks*, and seldom allows himself to be taken in. He has even invented, for those who resell the bath tickets, a sovereign remedy that has done wonders.

One fine day a beggar, who by selling sulphur bath tickets had been making a fine income, presents himself to Dr. Desprès.

'Good-morning, doctor.'

'What is the matter, my good man?'

'I have come for some bath tickets. I have constant pains in my legs.'

'And why do you wish to take baths?'

'Because it relieves me very much. You gave me tickets for six months, and I am much the better for them.'

‘Listen to me,’ says the doctor, ‘and try to follow my argument. Rheumatism is caused by moisture.’

‘Just so. I live in a room that is terribly damp.’

‘Do let me speak. Rheumatism is caused by moisture; now, baths produce moisture. I will give you something else,’ and turning to his pupils: ‘Students,’ exclaims the doctor, ‘apply twelve hot needles to this gentleman.’

The beggar, at the suggestion of this new treatment, vanishes, and since that time his rheumatism and that of his comrades in the surrounding district has completely disappeared.

Most of the maimed beggars, far from wishing to disguise their infirmities, are more inclined to exaggerate them by exposing them in the public highways. I know a little hunchback who has such a clever way of tucking up his legs and sitting upon them that you could swear that you were looking at a man deprived of his two legs.

Nine times out of ten, when you notice a beggar who exhibits two infirmities, you may be sure, with no risk of being mistaken, that one of the two infirmities is a sham.

Thus, for instance, the one-armed man generally wears a blouse. He sits upon one leg and stretches out the other, so that the passer-by, seeing only one arm and one leg, believes that the unfortunate cripple is deprived of two members.

Sometimes the cripple enjoys such good health as leaves nothing to be desired. I knew a man at the Neuilly fair, sixty years of age, who wore a pea-jacket with brass buttons and a sailor’s cap. He was seated on a chair, his legs and his chest were wrapped in a thick woollen rug, under which he hid his hands; a large picture, propped upon his knees, represented a naval combat.

'Gentlemen, ladies,' said the beggar, 'behold the work of a poor paralytic, wounded in defending his country in a great naval engagement.'

In spite of yourself, you looked at this rather childish painting, and you felt your heart softened by the thought that this old sailor, who had been wounded, crippled for life, in defending his country, should be reduced to holding out his hand like a common beggar.

For my part, I never passed before my paralytic without leaving a penny in his cup.

One summer night, about eleven o'clock, I was returning to Neuilly when I came across a solid, strapping fellow, who with a firm, quick step was going towards Paris. He was dressed in a coat with brass buttons and a sailor's cap. On his back was a commissionaire's hook, and on the hook was the famous picture of the naval engagement, firmly tied with string, and well covered by the woollen rug that I had so often noticed on my beggar's knees.

'Tell me, my good man, are you not the paralytic of the Porte-Maillot?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But your paralysis does not prevent you walking?'

'Not the least in the world.'

'But then you are not paralyzed?'

'Certainly not.'

'And yet you ask alms as if paralyzed.'

'Not at all. I never said that *I* was paralyzed. I say, "Behold the work of a poor paralytic, wounded in defending his country in a naval engagement." The paralytic is the artist who made the picture. I only show it.'

'And what about the coverlet in which you wrap your legs and chest in the middle of the month of July?'

‘It is the coverlet that I use to wrap my picture in at night in case of rain. During the day I must put it somewhere, so I put it on my knees.’

This man, you will tell me, is a swindler. So I think; but his swindling does not come within the grasp of the penal law, which no more forbids anyone to wrap his legs in a blanket than it forbids weeping women to sigh or cry in an omnibus. This is a small industry, by which ten francs a day can be gained.

There are some real cripples who get the pay of a Member of Parliament; that is to say, twenty-five francs a day.

The regular strollers on the boulevard know the *letter-box woman*, who competes so successfully with the *poste-restante*.

The letter-box woman is a beggar who stations herself always in the same place. When passing her you notice her infirmity, and of course hasten to give her a small gratuity; but while your right hand feels in your pocket for a few sous, which you seem unable to find, with your left hand you slip a letter into the beggar’s hand, saying to her:

‘Hand this letter to a lady who will pass between eight and nine o’clock, and who, whilst giving you sixpence, will say “*Pray for me.*”’

‘Very well,’ answers the beggar. You give her a franc, and the thing is done.

No comment is necessary.

And what shall be said of the man who, at the moment when people are leaving the Eden Theatre or the Folies Bergères, rolls on the ground in an epileptic fit, foaming at the mouth?

You hurry to help the poor unfortunate; you tend him, and when the crisis is over you have him taken

home in a hackney carriage, after making a present to his companion who collected the donations.

You think, perhaps, you have done a charitable act, whilst you have really been cheated by a false epileptic, who simulated all the horrors of an epileptic fit by sucking a piece of soap. The companion who made the collection, it is needless to say, was an accomplice.

M. Maxime du Camp has told a story which shows to what lengths the mendicant's ingenuity is sometimes pushed.

On Sunday, August 28, 1887, at the time when people were thronging the quays near the Champs Elysées, a badly-dressed man uttered a cry of despair, and threw himself into the Seine, near the Alma Bridge. The crowd pressed forward and saw the unfortunate man reappear on the surface of the water, which he was beating with meaningless gestures, and then sink again as though he had gone down. At this instant another man, dressed like a workman, threw himself into the river, swam vigorously, seized the drowning man, and with great efforts brought him to the bank. Everybody came up and surrounded the rescuer and the half-drowned man, who seemed to be recovering from unconsciousness and was exclaiming, 'What have you done? Why did you not let me die? I have no work, and I have not eaten anything for three days.' He rose and was going to rush towards the river, but they held him back while he struggled with them. 'Let me go! Let me die!' Here his rescuer intervenes and fumbles in his pocket, pulling out sixpence: 'Take this; it is all I have left; I shall only have to go without my dinner to-day!'

These two poor fellows fall into each other's arms, embracing in a devoted brotherly fashion. Who, I ask, would be unmoved by such a spectacle? All hearts are

touched and eyes moist, and everyone puts his hand into his pocket. Pence, silver pieces, two gold pieces, are given to this poor man who has fasted for three days.

The two comrades go off, helping each other along with slow steps as long as they are on the quays, a little quicker when they get near Chaillot, briskly enough as soon as they believe themselves to be out of sight. Two police agents, sceptics by profession and nature, had witnessed the incidents of this adventure. They surreptitiously followed the acolytes, who went into a tavern where a company of no very edifying appearance was awaiting them. They spread the money they had collected on the table. With loud shouts of joy the two actors shake themselves as wet dogs would shake the water from their coats, and then, laughing at the stupidity of those 'brutes of citizens,' they order a *Balthazar*. Three hours later the two bath companions, still damp, but dead drunk, were arrested by the police who lay in wait for them, and were taken to the police station, whence they had not far to go to reach the police court. These ingenious persons were liberated convicts, who wanted to make a good meal at the expense of compassionate people. I have myself had occasion to witness a fraud of the same nature, and cannot resist the temptation to narrate the story.

It was in March, 1889, between six and seven o'clock in the evening. I had just got into the omnibus going from the Place Saint Michel to the Saint Lazare Station, when a miserably-dressed woman, in a far advanced state of pregnancy, took a place in the same omnibus, and sat down opposite me.

Immediately after the omnibus had left the station, the woman, who appeared not to be able to bear the least jolting of the vehicle, sighed and showed signs of dis-

comfort and suffering, which everyone recognised and apprehended the result. All of a sudden the woman utters a cry, and all eyes turn towards her. The ladies approach with whispered questions. 'Oh, poor woman, how pitiable to see such things! Is it reasonable to go out in an omnibus in that condition?' 'What did she say?' 'That she has had nothing to eat since yesterday, and that she was going to seek work when she was suddenly seized with pains.' 'But something must be done for this poor creature; stop, conductor; we are going to send this woman in a cab to her home.'

This scene passed before my own eyes. As for me, I sat still in a corner. As you may suppose, my indifference had the effect of revolting many a tender heart, for a lady, addressing herself to her neighbour, said aloud: 'If that gentleman had any kindness, he could help us.'

'That is very true,' remarked the rest of the passengers in chorus, to whom I must have seemed a very heartless man.

'Ladies, what can I do?'

'You might help this woman to get into a cab and take her home. We will pay the cab.'

And immediately one lady gave fifty centimes, another two francs, another five francs. The mother that is to be put the result of this collection into her pocket, and, leaning heavily on my arm, she got out of the omnibus.

'Where do you wish to be taken?'

'To Belleville, sir.'

'But to which street—what number?'

'To Belleville, sir.'

'I understand quite well, to Belleville, but in what street?'

'I am suffering too much to answer.'

'Very well.'

I took a cab, and after carefully settling my poor patient, I seated myself beside her.

‘Driver, go towards Belleville,’ I shouted.

The good woman is dumbfounded, but I soon reassure her.

‘Do not let my presence inconvenience you, madam. I am a doctor,* and I will give you every attention that your condition requires.’

‘Sir, do not come near me—do not come near me! If you approach me I shall scream and call for help.’

‘Come, now, calm yourself, and tell me first where you live.’

‘I am suffering too much, sir.’

‘But it seems to me that since you can say, “I am suffering too much,” you could say such a street and such a number.’

‘No, sir.’

‘Then I shall take you to the hospital.’

‘I will not go to the hospital.’

‘Well, then, to the maternity.’

‘No, sir; leave me. Get out of the cab or I will call for help.’

And the woman began to yell. In truth, I began to weary of my imposed task. I opened the door and got out of the cab, saying to the driver:

‘The woman will direct you where to stop.’

A week later, at Neuilly, Boulevard Maillot, before a rich Jewish banker’s residence, a woman was seated on the ground in the pangs of child-birth. I happened to be told of it. I hastened to the spot, and I found the same woman.

‘What! is it you again! Decidedly this child-birth

* It is needless to say that I have not the honour of being a doctor.

appears to be a very hard labour. Last week I offered to take you to your home, and I could not induce you to give me your address. I offered to take you to the hospital or to the maternity, and you refused. This time I shall take you to a place where they will at once relieve you of all your pains. Let us go to the Préfecture of Police.'

At these words the good woman springs up as if she had been shot. She takes the front of her figure and pushes it to the back, and rushes off at full speed to the Bois de Boulogne. The protuberance was made of cardboard.

That is a trick by means of which you may make a good living; so also does the deaf and dumb man, who, at the entrance of the St. Lazare Station, sells you for ten centimes the deaf and dumb alphabet of the Abbé de l'Epée, and who is possessed of a more voluble tongue than either you or I.

I knew one of these deaf and dumb men, who was to be seen in the large glass hall which leads into the waiting-rooms for the suburban trains. For years and years this good man spent all his days there in going from one ticket-office to another, offering to all the passengers a little sheet of blue paper, on which was written :

'Gentlemen and Ladies,

'In accepting this alphabet, so easily acquired, to teach you the dumb language, so useful to know, you will oblige your servant, who is deaf and dumb.

'It costs only ten centimes.'

I confess I have often in former times done like others; that is to say, I have more than once given my two sous to the poor deaf and dumb man.

I happened one evening, coming out of the Chamber

of Deputies, as I was passing before the Magasin du Printemps accompanied by one of my colleagues, to notice a considerable crowd of people. I approached, and found the cause of it was a quarrel. Two men were disputing, and were flinging the coarsest epithets in one another's faces. The one who shouted the loudest was actually my deaf and dumb friend. A policeman was vainly trying to put a stop to the dispute.

'Allow me to do it,' I said to him; then, going up to the deaf and dumb man, I whispered in his ear these simple words: 'I belong to the police, and I know you, you deaf and dumb hypocrite. You had better be off at once, or I will arrest you.'

My man did not need to be told a second time, and, to the great astonishment of the passers-by and of the policeman, he vanished at once.

Since then my deaf and dumb man has given up his trade; but he has not left the neighbourhood of the Saint Lazare Station, where he distributes to-day prospectuses for a neighbouring restaurant.

Every time I pass him he makes me a profound bow, but at the bottom of his heart he thoroughly detests 'that vile policeman,' who forces him to trudge up and down all day to earn three francs, when by playing a deaf and dumb man in that vast railway-station, through which thirty thousand travellers sometimes pass in a few hours, he might easily in an afternoon swindle five or six francs out of compassionate people.

I am far from pretending that there are not in Paris many really blind and deaf and dumb beggars; but I maintain that among the blind and deaf and dumb who hold out their hands to us there are many sham ones, who possess excellent eyes and who can speak as well as you or I.

Just as Father Antoine, whose history I will give further on, had monopolized the begging at the doors of several churches, so certain contractors organize mendicity for their own profit in different quarters of the capital.

This particular class of contractors hire false or true cripples and provide their outfits—I may say, the necessary disguise. They keep in stock all the implements which beggars could need: they have barrel-organs for the healthy, crutches for the lame, alphabets for the deaf and dumb, fortune-tellings for the old men, poodle-dogs and pictures for the blind. These pictures are of infinite variety: there is the picture on which you read, ‘Father of a family; blind from amaurosis’; the picture which contains a certificate of a doctor of the Parisian medical faculty, or else the famous picture representing a formidable explosion—a house is blown into the air, and under the ruins you discover a poor workman covering his face with his hands to screen it from the surrounding flames.

A gentleman, whose eyes had been attracted by a picture of this kind, stopped one day before the blind man and questioned him in these words:

‘Tell me, now, my good friend, where the explosion took place that is represented in this picture.’

‘I do not know, sir,’ answered the blind man. ‘I bought this picture at the Hôtel Drouot.’

An English journalist, Mr. Vaux, told me a story of the same kind.

He was walking in a London street when he met a blind man, who begged alms of him. Mr. Vaux, feeling in his pocket for some small money, let a penny fall on the ground. Immediately the blind man thanks him, and picking up the penny, puts it in his pocket.

‘For a blind man,’ Mr. Vaux said to him, ‘you see very well.’

‘Sir,’ said the blind man, ‘I am not blind.’

‘And that placard which you wear on your chest, “Blind from birth”?’

‘Why, my master blundered this morning in distributing the placards : he gave me by mistake the one belonging to the blind man. I am one-handed.’

These master contractors are more numerous than one imagines ; their power is due to the fact that they have good places at their disposal. They know how to monopolize and defend against any competition the most advantageous places, those by which the largest number of people pass ; they turn to account the approaches to churches, to stations, to cafés ; they hold the bridges, the porches, all the places, in fact, where there is a chance of making a large amount.

They excel in the art of distributing these ‘lays.’ At the door of ironworks they install *the blind man, victim of a boiler explosion*. The Parisian workman is good-hearted ; he is very generous, and especially on his pay-day he will give largely to an unfortunate comrade. The children take their stand before the pastry-cooks, the little girls offer flowers to the frequenters of the cafés, while the organ-grinders will be given a manuscript list of certain ill-famed public-houses used by the military school, where they are sure to make a good sum, provided they have some polkas and waltzes in their catalogue. There is nothing more scandalous than those balls which I have witnessed, but on which I will not enlarge out of respect for my readers, and because I wish my book to be fit for all readers.

Mendicants hired in this way conform the more readily to the directions of their patrons, because they

are thus enabled to learn their trade. After a few months of apprenticeship they will become masters in their turn; they will know both the good places and the good tricks, and will astonish you perhaps by the degree of perfection to which they have attained.

Last year, when the police commissioner of Neuilly had organized a raid upon the beggars, he found a man wearing at the end of his arm a jointed apparatus most elaborately made, and in which he concealed his hand. All who knew this beggar were persuaded that he was one-handed. It needed the clear perception of a clever police-officer to detect the fraud. I know some false cripples who have been arrested, and who have remained at the house of detention two or three times without their fraud being discovered.

One day, at a prison in the West of France, the prison-van arrived, bringing two Spanish beggars, who pretended to be deaf and dumb. Each was found crawling in a little vehicle as if a cripple. But one of the beggars had already betrayed himself by attacking with his crutch the watchman who arrested him.

The governor of the prison had doubts as to the infirmities of the other prisoner. He put him through a searching examination without obtaining any result. The beggar always triumphed over the traps set for him. He kept his legs tucked under him, and only uttered inarticulate sounds. The governor was still not convinced, and he ended by imparting his suspicions to the doctor of the establishment.

What do you think the doctor did? He took the beggar and chloroformed him. The operation over, they laid the false cripple flat on his bed, and found no difficulty in assuring themselves of the absence of any defect. On waking, and finding himself stretched out

and betrayed, the crawling cripple, forgetting that he was deaf and dumb, threw himself into a frightful rage, cursing in Spanish the doctor and his assistants.

The confederates were condemned to two months' imprisonment, and the doctor was very proud of having effected such a marvellous cure.

Confederates of this kind swarm in the streets of Paris. Why? Because in Paris the clever beggar is well off, lives at his ease, and sometimes reaps an income such as the small citizen, or the modest clerk in frock-coat, who daily takes a penny from his pocket to give in charity, will never possess.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MENDICANT TYPE.

WHEN you closely study the question of mendicity, one of the things which strike you at once is the existence of a *mendicant type* even.

What is a type? It consists of all the distinctive characters of a race or a profession taken together. To acquire the type of a profession one must have practised it for some time, and have been subject to its requirements, its habits, and its consequences. Take an ecclesiastic or a military man, who during many years has followed his vocation and worn a particular costume, and make him put on the coat of a civilian; in spite of his disguise you will easily recognise him. So, then, if mendicity were merely induced by poverty, especially transient poverty, it would seem that the unhappy man ought to preserve beneath his rags the type of the calling to which he belongs. On the contrary, by what do you

recognise a beggar in the street? Is it by the miserable state of his clothes? No, indeed! for every day you meet workmen whose clothes, from the nature of their work, are in tatters and extremely dirty, and yet it would never occur to you to offer alms to those workmen, for they bear in their faces that look of pride and independence which honest work alone can give.

Take a thousand of these workmen, and place a single beggar amongst them. You would know him at once. And why? Because the beggar has a special type, which is like none other.

This simple observation ought to be enough to convince you that mendicity is a profession; the man who practises it must have begged for a long time to have attained to the mendicant type.

Thus it happens that, by a strange anomaly, this type, which ought to put us on our guard against the beggar, constitutes, on the contrary, the most powerful motive which decides us to give the alms he begs for.

A man comes up to us in the street. He holds out his hand. We look at him; he is of the mendicant type. That is enough; we straightway conclude that he is an unfortunate individual, that he is suffering, and that he is worthy of our charity.

And so the beggars, who are aware of this false reasoning, of which we are daily the dupes, endeavour by every means in their power to approach as nearly as possible to this ideal type, which is sure to inspire the passer-by with profound pity, and procure a good income for themselves.

To make believe that one is suffering, and, if the suffering is real, to exaggerate it—that is the problem they have to solve. In this enlightened age, when scientific discoveries have made it possible to imitate all

products of human industry, mendicants have not lagged behind; they have succeeded in simulating distress itself.

An English member of Parliament, wanting to find out how much the physique of the beggars influenced the purses of passers-by, one day made a curious experiment. He went into the street miserably but cleanly dressed, leaned with his back against a wall, and held out his hand. He stayed in that position all one afternoon; but he got nothing. After having dressed himself in a costume composed entirely of shapeless rags, he put five or six pieces of bread into his pocket, and wandered up and down in an out-of-the-way street. As soon as he saw a well-to-do person likely to give alms, he took out a piece of bread, hid it in his hand, and in a favourable moment, unseen, threw it before him in the mud; then suddenly, as if he had discovered a treasure, he rushed at the piece of bread, seized it, and, wiping it carefully on his trousers, appeared to be devouring it with avidity, and continued his walk without begging anything. The passer-by invariably turned round, looked at him an instant, then, retracing his steps, gave him money.

‘I have thus tried more than fifteen people,’ said this member, ‘and not one has failed me. Each one, of his own accord, without being solicited, made me his offering. Some gave me gold; the sum total was splendid.’*

* I have often in my addresses related this anecdote—I related it to put the public on their guard against the trickeries of the false poor. I do not know if it has served to convince the public to whom I spoke, but it is certain that it has not been lost upon everybody. For instance, on May 9, 1893, I was dining opposite the Terminus Hotel, on the terrace of the Scossa Restaurant, where I had purposely planted myself to study the types of the false poor who swarm in that quarter, when a man in a shabby long coat, with a black beard, glasses on his nose, of a regular Bohemian type, plants

What does this experience show, but that the public always allows its pity to be excited by a beggar's wretched appearance? Is it surprising, then, if the beggar uses great skill in cultivating such an appearance as will allow him to reap a good harvest? And when he has succeeded in creating a type to suit his convenience—a type which has stood the test, which has proved successful—is it surprising that he should keep to it and improve upon it? All those who have made a close study of the night-shelters know what difficulty one often finds in persuading certain mendicants to accept the bath that is offered them, and such other attentions to their person as consist in cutting the hair and cleansing the beard.

‘A bath!’ said one day in my presence a beggar who had just arrived at a charitable house where labour was provided; ‘what is the use of a bath? Does not perspiration wash one?’

The truth is, that in cleansing this man, in mending his clothes, in giving him an appearance of respectability,

himself before me and looks fixedly at my plate, the contents of which he seemed to covet.

In my turn I look at my beggar, who, the moment I look up, darts under my table, and, picking up a tiny piece of bread, brushes the dust from it and eats it voraciously.

Two tables further on the same manœuvre begins again, and I notice that the piece of bread picked up is just as small as that which the poor fellow had found at my feet.

I at once pay for my dinner and follow the man, who before every restaurant—and they are numerous in that street—goes through the same pantomime. I soon discover that he holds in his hand the tiny piece of bread that he pretends to pick up from the ground. I at once approach the beggar. I question and threaten him, and end by discovering that the famous piece of bread is a Guillot biscuit, an almost entire packet of which is found in his pocket. My object in telling this story has been to enlighten the good people who freely give alms in the street. Shall I perhaps only have been the means of imparting a new trick?

you destroy his type and deprive him of his *stock-in-trade*.

Last winter a beggar came to call at my house who was barely clothed. He said, 'I am a workman without work, literally dying of cold. Could you not give me clothing of some kind to cover me?'

Following my usual practice, I offered the man some work, which he accepted. I made him sweep my street, and an hour later, finding it impossible to watch him any longer, I dismissed him, after having given him a jacket, very warm, and in good condition, seeing that the day before I had worn it myself. A few days later I met my man in Paris. He was begging again, and was wearing the garment I had given him, but the garment was unrecognisable, so dirty, patched, and misshapen was it. I was curious to know how, in four or five days, this beggar had been able thus to wear out a garment which to my mind ought to have done long service.

I approached the beggar and renewed acquaintance with him. I spoke kindly to him, and pitied his condition, and to make him believe that the feelings I expressed were really from the bottom of my heart, I offered to give him something to eat. He naturally accepted my offer, and we went together into an eating-house, where I had him served with a meal.

While my beggar was eating, I examined my former garment. No, I was not mistaken: it was indeed my jacket, but, good heavens! what spots, what a mass of mud, what a transformation! The braid that bound it had completely disappeared, and, what was still more surprising, another braid that bound the sleeves, which at any rate could not have been worn out, was also absent. In the back a large patch of black cloth sewn on my gray jacket gave the garment a shabby appear-

ance, which grieved me. To have thus worn out my jacket this man must have slept in the open air. I put some questions to him, and he told me that since the day when he came to my house he had constantly slept in the night-shelter, never having been able, in spite of his efforts, to find any work.

In short, the worn-out condition of my garment was becoming inexplicable. I carefully examined the patch which I had so regretfully noticed, and I discovered that the patch did not cover a hole or conceal any rent.

‘But, my good man, tell me now why you have stuck that patch on your back.’

The beggar seemed at first embarrassed; then little by little he ended by acknowledging that the jacket was too good for him. If he had worn it in the state in which I gave it to him, he could not have begged any more. ‘People would not have believed, sir, that I was destitute, and I had to pay a woman two sous *to alter it for me.*’

‘And who is that woman?’ I asked.

‘Oh, she is a woman who leads a blind man about, and who, when she has time, arranges garments for beggars.’

How many charitable ladies of my acquaintance, how many good mothers of families, in spite of their multifarious occupations, and sometimes of their exceedingly slender means, take care always to repair old garments before giving them to the poor, so that, as they say, they may wear longer!

They have no suspicion that *a maker of patches for the beggars* will come and render all their work and trouble useless.

And do not suppose that the story I tell is an isolated case. I could multiply examples and prove them.

Thanks to the permission of several préfets of police, I have paid long and numerous visits to the first bureau of the second division of the Préfecture of Police. All beggars pass through this bureau, as well as other persons who are arrested in Paris under any kind of accusation.

The head of the bureau proceeds with a summary examination, and collects the information which will afterwards be considered by the magistrate. Whenever the beggar happens to be more unfortunate than culpable, the functionaries of this office, who are fully acquainted with the different charitable agencies that are at work in Paris, try to help and save him by getting him admitted into a charitable establishment of one kind or another.

One day, with M. Pottet, deputy-superintendent of that bureau, and certainly one of the most intelligent and zealous officers of the Préfecture of Police, I was present at the examination of a series of beggars, when a particular 'dossier' was put before me. These 'dossiers' are constructed in such a practical way that a mere glance is sufficient to take in the whole at once. Marks of different forms indicate the number of arrests, of consignments to the house of detention, of condemnations, in such a way that, so to say, by merely handling the 'dossier' you can tell at once if you have to do with a beggar whose first offence it is, or with an 'old hack.'

This particular 'dossier' concerned an 'old hack' of great experience, seventy times convicted for mendicity and vagrancy.

I carefully examine, one by one, all the papers, and I notice that the old offender belongs to a very honest family. He has himself received some education, and

yet he has passed half his life in prison, without having ever committed either a crime or a very grave offence.

I ask to see this man; he is brought to me, and I question him. I find before me an old man of energetic and intelligent appearance. He is educated, and, in spite of the rags that cover him, he has an air of superiority rarely met with in the common vagrant. Everything about him tells of the most profound misery—garments out at elbow, a complete absence of linen, neglected beard and disordered hair. I ask the man how it happens that he has been convicted seventy different times for mendicity and vagrancy. ‘Would it not be more interesting to work than to spend your whole life in prison?’ I ask. ‘It seems to me that to procure for yourself a condition preferable to that of imprisonment, you need not make such a very great effort.’

‘Sir,’ the vagrant answers, ‘I am a victim of the mendicity law. I once held out my hand; I was sentenced to imprisonment. I came out more wretched than I went in. No one would have anything more to do with me, and for thirty years I have been fated to return from the street to the prison and from the prison to the street. How can you expect that, with such a miserable dress, I could get myself hired as a labourer in a workshop? No one has ever come to my assistance.’

‘But you have some very rich relations—a brother and an uncle in good positions.’

‘They have disowned me since the day I was sentenced to imprisonment.’

‘But there are societies to help the discharged prisoners.’

‘I do not know of them.’

‘I am surprised at that.’

‘If, on coming out of prison, I had received some clothes and forty sous, I should certainly have got out of my difficulties, and the public would count one beggar the less and one honest man the more.’

‘All beggars say the same thing, and when you try to help them by giving clothing or money, nine times out of ten you find you have been cheated.’

‘Oh, sir! I have often had that answer. It is the good who suffer for the bad. I have received in my life plenty of advice, but have rarely been given any practical assistance. To think that there are so many millionaires in Paris, and that not one of them has enough heart to risk five francs to save a man!’

‘Come, are the feelings you express quite sincere?’

‘I swear it, sir, upon all that is most sacred.’

‘Well, listen to me. I will try to effect the salvation of which you speak. I will look after you, and will request that you shall be immediately set at liberty. I will stand surety for your repentance, and for your honesty in future. I will give you all that is necessary to gain your bread—in a word, I will be entirely answerable for you, and I hope I shall not have to repent it.’

The next day my man is set at liberty. I have him given a bath; I dress him from head to foot in the bureau of the Préfecture itself; I give him a small sum of money, and, what is more valuable, a ticket of admission into the charitable house in the Rue Clavel.

‘For a fortnight,’ I tell him, ‘you will be lodged, fed, and taken care of in this house. You will have all your mornings free to look for work. In the afternoon you will make small bundles of faggots; that will be the return for the hospitality shown you. And at the end of a fortnight, if your conduct is irreproachable, and if

you have not found an employment of some sort, I undertake to get you employed in a workshop.'

The beggar is profuse in his thanks, and he leaves the Préfecture of Police completely transformed. He had entered it in rags, conducted by two constables; he left it dressed almost as a gentleman, and absolutely free. For the first time for thirty years he walks the streets of the city without attracting attention to his person. You would take him for a clerk going to his office. I follow him at a certain distance, wondering anxiously whether the small sum of money I had given him, and which I had recommended him to keep carefully as a precious treasure, would not take him to the cabaret. But no! The beggar directs his steps towards Belleville, and, without stopping anywhere, goes and calls at Pasteur Robin's hospitable house.

I go back to M. Pottet, proud of the rescue I had effected, and I thank him for the help he has been good enough to give me.

The next day I write to Pasteur Robins' new pensioner. I tell him that I followed him; I congratulate him on not having spent the little sum he had in his pocket at the wine-shop; I encourage him to persevere in the right way, and, so as not to be accused of giving only good counsel, I enclose two francs in my letter.

For three days my man works fairly well, but on the fourth, wearied by such unusual effort, he leaves the hospitable house in the Rue Clavel, eats his small savings, sells his garments, re-dresses himself in his rags, and resumes his mendicant character, thanks to which he can again hold out his hand to excite pity from the passers-by, and so get a living.

But, you will say, after some weeks or some months of this life the prison will recapture the man. That is

certain; the beggar knows it will, but he infinitely prefers to run the chance of some months in prison rather than to devote himself to regular work. Everything and anything but work.

And why should he work, since in order to live he need only hold out his hand to inspire compassion? To gain this end and excite pity any method will suffice, and the beggar will have recourse to lies, to acting, to simulating an infirmity of some kind, and at times even to crime. Professors, old retired beggars, teach him the art of working upon the feelings of the passers-by.

Many people refuse to believe that there are professors of mendicity; and yet the fact is certain. Just as in looking at a picture the connoisseur can indicate the school to which it belongs, so, by attentively watching a beggar you can guess the master whose lessons he has followed.

Take the street-singers, a class of beggars I have very closely studied. I have often installed myself at the windows of various houses, into the yards of which the concierges allow strolling singers to penetrate, and the first thing I noticed was that the *répertoire* is always the same. It comprises altogether five or six songs. The best known is 'Lise aux Lèvres roses,' which they sing to the tune of 'La Pauvre Abandonnée.' Listen to the beggar; whether he be young or old, whether man or woman, the proceeding is always the same. He sings three couplets, not one more, not one less. If he receives nothing, he goes away; if you give him any money, he adds a fourth. For such a couplet his voice quivers, for such another the intonation is different. Evidently it is the same master who has taught the same song to all of them.

I have had the curiosity to procure the exact words of

the beggars' songs. This commission I gave to the concierges of the houses of which I have spoken ; I said to them : ' When a beggar comes here, and when he has finished singing, ask him to give you in exchange for a twenty-sous piece the words of his songs.'

My instructions were followed, and I thus procured a large number of manuscript copies of ' *Lise aux Lèvres roses*.' Here is the first verse :

' Dans une douce rêverie
Où s'égarait mon pauvre cœur,
Je voyais l'image chérie
De celle qui fut mon bonheur.
Je voyais *Lise aux lèvres roses*,
Me revenant par un beau soir
En me disant de douces choses
Qui rendaient mon cœur plein d'espoir.

Well, in the beggars' copy I find in this one verse nine faults in the spelling, and these nine faults are exactly repeated in all the manuscript copies which thus reached me.

Is not that a proof that all these songs come from the same manufactory ?

I have questioned a great many of these beggars.

' Why do you sing instead of working ?'

' Because I have lost my husband and have children to provide for.'

' Very well. But who taught you "*Lise aux Lèvres roses*" ?'

' It is a song that I knew.'

Ask fifty, a hundred, two hundred street-singers. All will give you the same answer. Not one of them would acknowledge where she had learnt the words and music of her song. Not one of them would give the address of the manufactory where the street-beggar is made. But this manufactory really exists, and the professor who

conducts it gives his lessons in the public-houses that surround the market-place. It is there that for a franc the singer learns in five lessons 'the words, the music, and the quivering voice.'

If from the street-singer we pass to the lame beggar, the same phenomenon may be noticed.

With what art they exhibit their infirmity ; with what care they expose their sores. Yes, I repeat it, the beggar's pose is never natural ; it is studied, calculated, purposed.

Here is a man who has lost a leg. He is certainly unfortunate, and, as compared with a sound man, is manifestly less able to gain his bread. But is it an absolute impossibility, evident and certain, for him to undertake some kind of work, to earn something towards his own support ?

No one would venture to assert it. I know men deprived of a leg who are coachmen, messengers, sweepers, shoemakers, newspaper-vendors, concierges. But, to fill any of these places it is necessary to work, and the beggar has a horror of work.

So here he is in the street. How can he win pity from the passers-by ? If this man had a wooden leg he would not produce the desired effect. And so he replaces the wooden leg by a crutch, and by this means he can produce a more tragical effect. Notice that fakir who has been stationed in the Rue Auber for years, and whose portrait figures at the beginning of this book, leaning with his back propped against the wall, his left leg extended ; in his right hand, which is stretched out towards the left, he holds five pencils, and the unfortunate man stays for hours in this position.

This fakir is one of my old acquaintances. I have often talked to him. He once made me some avowals.

At one time he was a jeweller's workman, and earned five francs a day, but he was obliged to arrive at the workshop at a fixed time, to work for twelve hours, and constantly had the 'monkey'—the master—at his back. 'Since I became a beggar I have made from 110 to 120 francs a month, but I work only five or six hours a day, and when it rains or snows, when the wind blows, I stay at home, where I read my favourite authors—Socrates (*sic*) and Paul de Kock!'

So the fakir sits on his crutch *because it makes a good picture and protects him from the damp.*

One day a beggar who had lost a leg conceived the idea of doing without any help, either cane, crutch, or stick, so as the better to attract attention from the passers-by. I marvel at the practice and training this man must have gone through to be able thus to stand upright and walk for hours together with only one leg. This new rôle has succeeded, professors have established themselves, pupils have arrived, and to-day a fresh class of 'single-footed' is fledged.

Another beggar, deprived of a leg, has thought of a still more clever trick. He sits at pastrycooks' doors, and entirely blocks the way with his wooden leg. How could you, going into a pastrycook's to treat yourself to a luxury, refuse a gratuity to this poor wretch over whose body, so to speak, you have to walk? If this new trick succeeds—and so far it seems to succeed—in a few years in order to enter a pastrycook's you will have to scale a hedge of wooden legs.

Everybody, however, is not maimed. But what does that matter? To create a good appearance as a beggar it is not necessary to have infirmities. Look at the church beggars; they are seldom cripples, but as a substitute, to give themselves the local colouring, they

Thanks to the permission of several *préfets* of police, I have paid long and numerous visits to the first bureau of the second division of the *Préfecture* of Police. All beggars pass through this bureau, as well as other persons who are arrested in Paris under any kind of accusation.

The head of the bureau proceeds with a summary examination, and collects the information which will afterwards be considered by the magistrate. Whenever the beggar happens to be more unfortunate than culpable, the functionaries of this office, who are fully acquainted with the different charitable agencies that are at work in Paris, try to help and save him by getting him admitted into a charitable establishment of one kind or another.

One day, with M. Pottet, deputy-superintendent of that bureau, and certainly one of the most intelligent and zealous officers of the *Préfecture* of Police, I was present at the examination of a series of beggars, when a particular 'dossier' was put before me. These 'dossiers' are constructed in such a practical way that a mere glance is sufficient to take in the whole at once. Marks of different forms indicate the number of arrests, of consignments to the house of detention, of condemnations, in such a way that, so to say, by merely handling the 'dossier' you can tell at once if you have to do with a beggar whose first offence it is, or with an 'old hack.'

This particular 'dossier' concerned an 'old hack' of great experience, seventy times convicted for mendicancy and vagrancy.

I carefully examine, one by one, all the papers, and I notice that the old offender belongs to a very honest family. He has himself received some education, and

occupant take upon themselves to expel, even by force, all new-comers who have the audacity to compete with them. I discovered this when I tried, in my turn, to go and beg at Saint Sulpice, or at Saint Eustache. The reception I received from a lot of ragamuffins was of a nature to destroy my taste for experiments of that kind. I acknowledge, with all humility, that I had to make myself scarce before my competitors.

Nevertheless, I did not despair, and, thanks to the intervention of M. Defert, mayor of the sixth district, and of the curé of Saint Germain des Prés, I was able on May 24, 1891, to install myself under the porch of that church. The beadle, if I should happen to be much ill-used, was to render me assistance. Five women made a hedge in front of the door, when, covered with rags, my right-hand paralyzed, my body doubled in two, my head covered with a huge wig, I came to take a place, in my turn, on the steps of the church.

It would not be easy to describe the effect produced by my appearance. I was greeted by a volley of mocking jests, coarse language, and abuse of which it would be difficult to give you an idea.

‘Just look at that man there,’ said one of the beggar-women to her neighbour. ‘Is he not ashamed to come and take our bread?’

‘Perhaps he has killed his father and mother,’ said the other, ‘and the villain dares come to the church.’

‘You would be much more in your place in prison than here, vile brute,’ adds a third, passing in front of me and consigning me to the second row.

The threats went on increasing, and I believe that had I not shown by a quick gesture that my falsely paralyzed hand was capable of a speedy cure when it was necessary

to defend my person, these old hags would have torn me to pieces.

A lady arrives.

‘Have pity on a poor father with seven children, and two of them infants!’ I whine.

The lady puts her hand in her pocket, takes out a sou, and gives it to me.

A second lady enters the church. This one is a charming person of my acquaintance, living at No. 10, Rue des Saints Pères. I had invited her to come and witness my experiment. She gives me a sou and does not even look at my neighbours, far too much occupied in repressing the burst of laughter that my disguise provokes in her.

A schoolboy, following his mother, takes out a few sous, which he distributes amongst the women, and puts a ticket for fuel into my hat.

A cook gives me two sous.

Here comes a senator. He knew me very well when he was a member of the National Assembly. He is far from supposing that the old paralytic, holding out his hand, is the former secretary of that Assembly. He passes without giving me anything. At last, say I to myself, here, at any rate, is one who holds sound principles!

Several other persons pass before me, and hearing me repeat that I am a poor father of seven children, do not hesitate to give me alms.

My neighbours shoot angry glances at me. They are exasperated at my competition with them.

I suddenly noticed that they were plotting something against me, and I was not mistaken. In two seconds, they had proposed, discussed and adopted an important resolution—to get me arrested.

Indeed, their tactics were very simple. Each time the policeman on duty in the square passed before the church my five women all turned round and stared at me as one would stare at a wrong-doer. The policeman, puzzled by this unusual manœuvre, presently eyes me in his turn. Just at first he looks at me with an assumed air of indifference. My beggars, who notice his glance, then make a sign with their heads that seems to say: 'Ah! happily the policeman understands that there is something for him to do.'

The worthy representative of authority looks at me this time more narrowly, then suddenly accosts me: 'What are you doing there?'

'I am begging, as you see.'

'How so! Begging—and you dare acknowledge it?'

'Oh yes; I beg, as all the women do.'

'Come, decamp, or I will lock you up!'

'Mr. Policeman, I wish you to observe that I am not on the public road, but under the church porch, and you have no right to arrest a beggar stationed here.'

'No arguments, I say. Decamp!'

Seeing that the policeman is very determined to make me move off, I try to parley with him, and in a mysterious voice whisper these words in his ear: 'Look well at me; if you knew who I was you would not arrest me.'

The policeman does not understand. He lays hold of me by one arm and shakes me like a plum-tree. He shakes me so hard that my wig—a wig à la Richepin, hired from Dieudonné, the hairdresser in the Rue Riche-lieu—flies off.

'What is that?' said the policeman, in a tragic tone.

'It is a wig.'

'How so—a wig?'

‘Yes, a wig. I have the right to wear a wig, as I am bald.’

‘This is too bad. I shall go and fetch the sergeant,’ and my good policeman leaves the church, crosses the square, looking round twice, no doubt to assure himself that I had not left my post.

At this moment an omnibus arrives, of which I take advantage, using it as a screen, and with the help of a friend, who had assisted me during this little comedy, I hide behind the omnibus, take off my wig and the band that was hiding my beard, and make with all haste towards the Rue Christine, where the novel-writer Bergeret lives, the author of so many charming novels, who had been good enough to offer me hospitality for the purpose. In haste I wash myself and change my clothes. I substitute a good frock-coat for my beggar’s jacket, a silk hat for my crumpled felt hat, and taking my stick and overcoat, I return to the church. My policeman was just off duty; he was going towards the police-station of the Rue des Saints Pères. I address him.

‘Tell me, then—just now you were going to arrest a beggar under the church porch?’

‘Yes, sir; but he escaped me.’

‘I was that beggar.’

The astounded policeman exclaims: ‘What do you mean, sir?’

‘I mean that the beggar was myself. Explain to me, then, why you wished to arrest a beggar under a church porch?’

‘You, sir, are no doubt a police commissioner?’

‘No, indeed! But be good enough to answer me—how did it come about that you were going to arrest a beggar under a church porch, who reminded you that he was not in the public road?’

‘ Oh, I see that you belong to the secret police.’

‘ Not at all. But, once more, do answer me. I thought that persons stationed at church doors were never interfered with?’

‘ You are perhaps M. Paulian, sir?’

‘ Who is that gentleman?’

‘ He is a gentleman I read of in the Petit Journal, who *begs for his amusement*’ (sic).

‘ Well, yes, I am the gentleman you read of in the Petit Journal. Have no fear, my good man; I will not bring you into any trouble. On the contrary, I have the honour of knowing the *préfet* of police, and I shall tell him that you did your duty. But just explain how it happens that of the six beggars that were at the church door you only interfered with one—myself?’

‘ I do not wish to be disagreeable to you, sir,’ answered the policeman, ‘ but you were *so peculiar*.’

‘ And so it was not because I was begging, but because *I was peculiar*, that I was arrested?’

I had stayed, according to my watch, fourteen minutes on the steps of Saint Germain-des-Prés, and had received thirteen sous, after deducting the two sous given me by the lady I mentioned, and which I naturally do not count in my sum. A little longer, and I should probably have been as successful as my neighbours, of whom one had made fifty-nine sous and the other three francs and two sous—and High Mass had not yet begun.

At the hour of vespers in the afternoon I again passed before the church. My five women had disappeared, but four other beggars had taken their place. The rotation is effected with the greatest regularity. Each one takes his watch, as on a ship. A captain surely must command that force.

A few months ago Father Antoine was buried in Paris.

He was a poor hunchback who had begged at church doors for fifteen years; but instead of doing only his watch, he begged the whole day—in the morning at Saint Etienne-du-Mont, at ten o'clock at Saint Augustin, and in the afternoon at Saint Sulpice. He was so old, so broken, and so wretched that he was welcomed everywhere by his colleagues. And then what a holy man he was! He prayed from morning to night, and never knelt but on the cold flagstone. The older he grew the more bent he became. The frequenters of the church pitied him, and seldom refused him alms. One fine day Father Antoine disappeared. 'He is dead,' said his comrades, and no more was heard of him. But suddenly a nephew of Father Antoine presented himself before the authorities, and requested that a post-mortem examination should be made of the hump on his back. They deferred to the wish of the heir-presumptive. They made an investigation, and discovered that Father Antoine's hump was nothing but a strong box, in which the beggar kept his savings, and his savings amounted to the sum of 96,000 francs; only they had disappeared at the same time as the hump. The search was continued, and ended in the discovery of the 96,000 francs in the hands of a M. Guillemin, a friend and neighbour of Father Antoine. The eleventh court of the Seine tribunal, before which all these facts were proved, condemned Guillemin to two years' imprisonment, and had this pretty little fortune refunded to the old mendicant's heir.

Father Antoine was one of my old acquaintances; I had been presented to him at a time when, in company with a woman named Clotilde Brillant (another rich church beggar); he carried on his calling at Saint Augustin, and 'did the rich funerals' at the Madeleine.

Father Antoine's real name was Pucciarelli, and on several occasions he had fallen into the hands of the law. He was in prison at Nîmes, and was actually serving a term of five years' imprisonment, when some of his relations, very respectable people, succeeded in interesting on his behalf a deputy of the Right, M. le Provost de Launay. The deputy, before taking any steps in the matter, wished to get correct information; he wrote to the prison director to ask his advice. The reply was that the convict had suffered half his penalty, that he had shown signs of amendment and repentance, and that he was in a fit state to benefit by a measure of mercy. M. le Provost de Launay drew up a request for pardon and sent it to the Minister of Justice, by whom it was favourably received.

Pucciarelli was set at liberty, and came to Paris to thank his benefactor. 'Sir,' he said, 'you have given me back to my family. I wish to prove to you my gratitude by behaving henceforth as an honest man. Will you place me in a position *of trust*, and I assure you that you will be well satisfied with my fidelity and devotion.'

M. le Provost de Launay, deeming that the record of a previous sentence is not the best recommendation for obtaining an employment of trust, put the man off by recommending him to seek to gain his bread in a more modest fashion. Not being able to obtain that place of trust of which he dreamt, Pucciarelli entered the service of the omnibus company in the character of a conductor. One must suppose that he found this occupation too arduous, for at the end of a few months he left the company to try to get married to a cook, from whom he stole five thousand francs, and whom he did not marry, for the very good reason that he was himself already

married. That *little error* cost him three months' imprisonment. On regaining his liberty for the second time, Pucciarelli decided to become a church beggar. He had already studied the trade while he was paying his court to the cook, and he knew how to bring it to perfection; for the beggars stationed near him in the three churches which he patronized were his employés, whom he protected against all possible rivals, deducting a commission on their gains.

In eighteen years Pucciarelli amassed 96,000 francs, thanks to his hunch-back, his fine white beard, and his deep piety—thanks, in a word, to the *type* he had known how to create.

But it is not given to everyone to know how to wear so forlorn an appearance; and thus many beggars have found it a simpler means of enlisting pity and inspiring belief in their own suffering to make children suffer. The use of children by beggars is, to my mind, the most abominable of all crimes, and yet that crime is neither prevented nor punished by law.

Article 309 of the Penal Code punishes with imprisonment every individual who has wilfully wounded or assaulted another, if illness or incapacity for work during more than twenty days results from such violence.

But to make a child ill, and even to kill it, no one need have recourse to blows or to violence. We have all seen, in winter and in the most rigorous cold, women stationed for whole hours together on bridges, holding two, three, and sometimes four, infants in their arms. Those poor little beings have wan faces, pinched noses, hollow eyes, and the whole of their body is frozen. To-morrow perhaps they will be dead; but what matters this detail to the unnatural mother if the display of this misery brings more sous into her wooden bowl?

Besides, often enough, the children do not belong to her; they have been hired from the wretched haunts in the Vieille-Estrapade or Marcadet Streets, in the Bouchardy Passage, or in the Sainte-Marguerite Street, where for thirty sous a day they will *entrust* a child to you, with the promise to *exchange* it if *an accident* should happen to it.

All these facts are known, and yet no remedy is found. Our legislators pass over the bridge of La Concorde every day to get to the Houses of Parliament. They can see there, as I have seen, a woman who for fifteen years has been nursing her child, and yet has never been interfered with.

A Paris doctor, M. Decaisne, wished to study the effect produced upon the health of small children by these long exposures on the highway. So he devoted one wet and snowy night to an investigation in his neighbourhood. He traversed the Grenelle, Saint-Guillaume, Bac, Varenne, Babylone, Monsieur, Vaneau, and Chanaleilles Streets, and counted forty-eight women engaged in this kind of begging.

He was able to gather pretty accurate particulars about twenty-seven of them, and about their families: twenty-four of them were forced by their husbands to beg; three begged of their own free will; ten had four children, eight had three, and nine had two. The ages of these women ranged from twenty-four to thirty-five years; seventeen had some calling. The rest had none. All but two had drunken husbands, and twelve of them depended upon the results of begging for the support of their homes.

The twenty-six children used for begging purposes were from six to thirteen months old. They were all brought up by hand, except two; eleven had slight

bronchitis, three had pneumonia, one whooping-cough, two measles, and one an internal complaint.*

I repeated this experience myself, and without having the honour of being a doctor, but with the natural intuition of the father of a family, who loves children and has brought up a large family, I remarked on several occasions that many of these little creatures whom beggars held in their arms in the winter were more dead than alive.

Offer these beggars to give you the charge of their children, so that you may put them into a crèche—they will reject your proposal. Without children, how are they to win sympathy from the passers-by?

In a night-refuge in Saint-Jacques Street, I knew a woman named Ousouf; she had four children, and begged in the street 'to get a living for her poor little ones,' but, instead of getting a living for them, by perpetually exposing them to rain and snow their unnatural mother despatched her four children successively into the next world. And now she is alone. What do you think she does? She borrows a fifth child, so as to be able to continue her trade, and society, so generous and so charitable in its dealing with infants—that society which protects the little creatures, and occupies itself about them even before they are born, is powerless to prevent this, and to punish the criminal use of children, who only ask to live, and who, when they escape death, are doomed by this use of them to fall into vice or crime.

Just think of what is likely to become of these children. As soon as they are four or five years old, they are sent to *work* all alone under the care of an elder brother or

* Communication made by Dr. Decaisne to the Société de Médecine Publique, March 28, 1888, republished in the *Revue d'Hygiène et de Police Sanitaire*, April 20, 1888.

sister. The mother or father taxes them at so much a day. The little company is obliged to bring back to the lodging at night two, three, or four francs; if not, let them beware of a flogging! One night when the thermometer stood at 10°, a patrol of police found a child of twelve years old under a doorway, fast asleep, holding his little sister of eight months old in his arms. Both of them were half frozen. They were taken to the police-station, warmed, and brought back to life. The corporal questioned the child kindly.

‘Have you a father?’

‘Yes.’

‘Have you a mother?’

‘Yes.’

‘Where do you live?’

‘In Sainte-Marguerite Street, at such a number.’

‘How does it happen that you did not go home last night?’

The poor little fellow, after much hesitation, ends by explaining that he is weary of being mercilessly beaten. He had done all he could to get four francs; he still needed forty-five centimes, and he had not the courage to go home, knowing what awaited him. Many will be touched when reading this story and will say to themselves: ‘What a pity I did not happen to be there, to come across that little boy! How willingly would I have given him the forty-five centimes he lacked.’ They are wrong. If you had given this child the forty-five centimes that were wanting to make up the sum of four francs, the next day the unnatural mother would have increased the sum, and would have taxed the child at four francs fifty centimes.

How many children there are in the evenings on the boulevard, offering us flowers, pencils or newspapers!

We experience a feeling of pain, seeing these tender beings wandering in the streets at a late hour of the night, and we give them a sou or two. We do not perceive that, instead of relieving their necessities, we only encourage vice by subsidizing the most odious of practices.

The more we give, the more greedy of his gains will the employer of these poor children become.

There is to-day a child on the boulevards who sometimes begs, sometimes sells the *Soir* newspaper. This child is stationed between the Madeleine and the Opera. He is between nine and ten years old ; he is lame, having lost one leg, and his father—is it his father ?—has given him a crutch that is not as high as it should be, so that the child, in leaning on this crutch, appears to be still more of a cripple than he is, by having his body bent to one side. This poor little being is on duty from twelve to fourteen hours, in rain, wind and snow, and is ever at his post. He has such a sweet face, and seems so interesting, with one leg cut off at the thigh, that those who pass give him abundant alms. The frequenters of the café are on the look-out for him to buy the *Soir* newspaper, and instead of giving him fifteen centimes many give him twenty. And so the child realizes a sum of from eight to twelve francs, and three times a day a man comes and empties his pockets, leaving him with barely a few sous to buy himself bread.

Let us look forward in thought a few years. What will have become of all these little boys who will have known neither work nor school nor the family hearth ? What will have become of all those little girls who have been made to wander all night long about the doors of certain *cafés* under the pretext of selling flowers ?

At one time Paris was overrun with Italian children,

who, under the pretext of a little music, devoted themselves to begging in the streets. We have known some padroni in the Panthéon Quarter who made use of companies of fifteen to twenty little children. At the end of about ten years these employers had made a fortune, and returned to their own country to live upon the money they had so honourably gained! But as to the children, they seldom see their country's sky again. Generally speaking, the girls end at Saint-Lazare, while the boys are stranded in prison.

At the end of a vigorous campaign, led by an Italian deputy, the Honourable M. Guerzoni, the Government at Rome, seconded by the French Administration, have put an end to these abuses. Have we suppressed the little Italian beggars merely to replace them by little French beggars? For, in truth, this trading with children is still going on; it is obvious to everyone, all are witnesses of it, and no one troubles himself about it. Here and there, perchance, a child is taken up for begging; but the system, as a whole, is allowed to flourish. And yet the Government knows of the evil; it knows not only that there are people who live by little children's begging, but that there are manufactories—establishments—where they purposely maim the children, to make them more interesting.

On March 26, 1887, M. Goblet, President of the Council and Minister of the Interior, addressed a circular to all the préfets (Circular No. 28), in which he called their attention to this criminal industry. In this circular the Minister begins by recalling the fact that in the springtime of each year France is invaded by individuals of foreign nationality—victims of every kind of deformity—who trade upon the charity of passers-by.

‘This spectacle,’ says the Minister, ‘is contrary to the

laws of sound government. It should not under any pretext be tolerated; if it were only for the sake of public order, measures should be taken to prevent it. But these exhibitions do not only affect public order; the cripples exposed to public view are introduced into the country by regular contractors, who hire their services, to practise mendicity for their own benefit. Alms given in charity in the streets to these wretched creatures do not go towards their maintenance or to the alleviation of their sufferings, but to procuring a living for a shameless individual who in this way turns to his own profit the resources intended for the indigent.

‘This trade involves, too, criminal acts. It was ascertained by an inquiry undertaken during my administration that crawling cripples have often been rendered infirm from their childhood by artificial means, which have deformed their limbs, doing violence to nature.

‘To tolerate mendicity in this form is to encourage an inadmissible industry, and acts for which the authors ought to be handed over to the courts. There is urgent need that steps should be taken without loss of time to put an end to this disorder.’

And the Minister ends by urging the *préfets* to have the leaders of these beggar-gangs found, and to expel them from the country if they are not Frenchmen.

Alas! this circular has not had any more effect than the preceding ones. Gipsies still continue to invade the country, while crawling beggars, more or less of foreign origin, more or less genuine, ply their trade in the towns.

Parliament has enacted a custom-house tariff, in which all possible produce has been included. Bread itself has to pay a tax before crossing the frontier. Only beggars

come in free, probably because they have been considered as the raw material of that gigantic industry called *trading upon public charity*.

Public opinion has taken the wrong direction ; it is no use blinding ourselves to the fact—it favours mendicity. Let a policeman arrest a woman in the streets, holding little children in her arms, and immediately the crowd takes the side of the *poor mother*—of that wretched woman who is, perhaps, the most inveterate of vixens, who brings up these children from infancy to lying and dissimulation.

Last year M. Dumay, a working-man member, received a visit from a woman who came to solicit relief of some kind. Members of Parliament are overwhelmed with visits of this description. M. Dumay cross-examines the petitioner ; he takes down her name and address, gives her a small sum of money and a recommendatory note to the Bureau de Bienfaisance, with the request that she may receive some relief. The woman has scarcely gone when M. Dumay, who is kind-hearted and is well acquainted with the distress of the working classes, begins to think over the story that he has just heard. If the poor woman told the truth—and her whole tone was such as to lead one to the belief that she was sincere—she must be very miserable. The sum given her by the deputy will be spent very soon, and perhaps the help from the Bureau de Bienfaisance will be a long time coming.

‘I did wrong,’ says M. Dumay to himself, ‘in merely giving an ordinary note of recommendation. I ought to have given this woman a stronger recommendation, and begged more urgent relief for her. If trouble comes of this I shall be morally responsible for it.’

This idea makes such an impression on Mr. Dumay’s mind that the honourable member can stand it no

longer, but takes his hat and stick and goes to the address given him, so as to find his beggar and to recommend her more strongly to the president of the Bureau de Bienfaisance.

After a quarter of an hour's walk he reaches the street indicated, and the beggar's lodging. He questions the concierge :

‘Mrs. X. lives here?’

‘Yes, sir—No. 36, on the fourth floor.’

‘She is in great distress?’

‘Oh, sir, she is in the most abject misery!’

‘Very well.’

The deputy climbs to the fourth floor and looks for No. 36. The door is half open. The woman has just come back, and is occupied in her household work. Suddenly a little boy who was on the stairs runs into the room and asks for something to eat.

‘Mother,’ says he, ‘I am hungry; give me a piece of bread.’

‘Alas! I can’t, my poor little darling,’ replies the mother. ‘There is only a very small piece of bread left in the house, and I am keeping it for your father, who, if he has not found work, will be very hungry when he comes in to-night.’

M. Dumay was affected to tears. How fortunate that he had taken the trouble to come and see for himself. Could anyone have imagined such destitution? The member enters the poor woman's room, gives another piece of money, and writes a most urgent letter to one of his friends, president of a Bureau de Bienfaisance. ‘My dear friend,’ he says to him, ‘I direct your attention to a heartrending case. I have investigated it myself. Give assistance to the woman X., and above all give quickly, for her children are literally without bread.’

M. Dumay goes home, his heart comforted at having done a good action.

Two days afterwards he receives the answer from the chairman of the Bureau de Bienfaisance. It was to the following effect: 'My dear député, you have been scandalously robbed. You say that you made the investigation yourself. In that case you heard a child cry out, "Mother, I am hungry; give me some bread," and the mother answer, "I can't, my poor darling; there is only a very small piece of bread left in the house, and I am keeping it for your father, who, if he has not found work, will be very hungry when he comes in to-night." The child is brought up to play this comedy. He stays the whole day on the staircase, and as soon as he sees a gentleman or lady arrive at the fourth floor he plays his part, which consists in asking for a piece of bread.'

If I were not afraid of tiring my readers, I could produce an infinite number of examples of this kind. Only one more; this will be the last.

One Sunday, in the Place Victor-Hugo, at the time when many ladies troop out of the church Saint-Honoré d'Eylau, a woman dressed in black fell into the basin of the fountain which is in the middle of the square. There was a rush to her rescue, and whilst a gentleman pulled her out of the water, a lady picked up a Prayer-book and chaplet which the poor woman had let tumble on the ground in her fall. A crowd gathers, several ladies offer their services, and they conduct the victim of the accident into a porter's lodge, where they make her drink some cordial.

While dry clothes are being procured for the poor woman they question her, and ask if she has hurt herself—if she wishes them to take her to her home.

The woman in the wet clothes does not answer ; she is hunting for some object which she seems to care very much about.

‘ What are you looking for, madame ?’

‘ My Prayer-book and chaplet.’

‘ Here they are.’

‘ Oh, thank Heaven ! I thought I had lost them. I value them so much !’ And the unhappy woman states that she is a widow ; that she was going to church to give the last piece of twenty sous she possessed to have a Mass said, that her son, her only son, a soldier in Tonkin, might be speedily restored to her.

You can easily guess the effect produced by this story upon the hearts of all, and especially upon the purses of all the ladies coming out of church. Soon a collection is made ; they hand about fifteen francs to the good woman ; they give her clothing, and have her taken back to her home in a carriage.

That is charity well bestowed, do you say ? I should have thought so, too. Unhappily, a week later the same accident occurs in the ornamental water in the Champs Elysées. A woman falls into the water, her Prayer-book and chaplet are found on the edge of the basin. They get her out and have her clothes dried. They learn by questioning her that the unfortunate woman was going to have a Mass said at the Madeleine, that her son, a soldier in Tonkin, might be quickly restored to her.

The following week the fountain Saint-Michel becomes the theatre for an accident of the same kind, and at last the préfet of police discovers that a woman called Louise Buffet, always the same, has found this ingenious means of making a small income for herself.

May these numerous examples of swindling put the public on their guard against the mendicant type.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARITABLE SOCIETIES—THEIR DEFECTS.

A FEW years ago in Russia a district was afflicted with a singular calamity. The country was suddenly invaded by an army of rats, that ravaged all before them.

The local administration of that country having cognizance of the system employed in France, where County Councils often vote sums of money to allow gratuities to school-children for destroying cockchafers, passed a resolution by which they promised to give a certain number of kopecks to all persons who should have destroyed twelve rats, and as they could not compel them to bring the carcasses of these rats to the mayoralty, they decided that the number of rats killed should be proved by their tails being brought to them.

The children at once set to work at their task; very soon the parents, tempted by the reward, followed the children's example, and a frightful massacre of rats ensued. When several months had elapsed the administration had spent a considerable sum in the shape of kopecks, and yet, judging by the havoc made every day by the rats, their number appeared not to have sensibly diminished.

The administration of this rural district considered that in the face of such a calamity all should put their hand to the plough and personally work at the enterprise; they charged one of their number to undertake the purchase of a certain number of municipal traps to be placed in all the public buildings.

The delegated councillor set himself at once to the task: he ordered the traps, and himself chose the spot

where each was to be placed. The next day at dawn this functionary, full of zeal, went to the mayoralty to judge for himself of the success of this experiment. He took up a trap, and, to his great joy, discovered that it contained eleven prisoners. The idea had certainly been a happy one, and the councillor was about to go and announce the good news to his colleagues, when, examining the rats more closely, he discovered to his horror that they were all, or nearly all, tailless!

One sees at once what had happened. The good villagers who earned three or six kopecks for a dozen dead rats were not long in understanding that if they really killed the rats there would very soon be no more occasion for the reward. And, not wishing to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs, each time that they caught a rat, they carefully cut off its tail to get the price, and then set the animal at liberty that the race might not diminish, so that the order given by the Russian administration, instead of ending in the destruction of rats, had only the result of developing a larger culture of them.

Well, in France the example of these Russian administrators has for a long time been followed, only instead of applying their system to the cultivation of rats, it is applied to the cultivation of beggars, and we spend every year millions and millions of francs to prevent the beggar race from becoming extinct.

It is the fashion of the day with certain people to accuse the upper and middle classes of indifference to the sufferings of the people. Certain men set to work to exasperate the people. If a calamity falls upon a district, these men are at once upon the scene. Instead of preaching patience, courage, work, agreement, justice, they incite to a strike, a revolt, pillage, incendiary acts,

and in the '*Manuel du Parfait Anarchiste*' they indicate the best recipe for explosives by means of which they may blow up the property of the citizens, and perhaps kill hundreds of innocent people in the streets. It is, no doubt, to these mob leaders that Franklin alluded when, addressing the people, he said to them: 'He who pretends that any can enrich themselves otherwise than by working and saving, corrupts them.'

If those who suffer could count the devoted men who bestow their money, their intelligence, their time and efforts, in a word, all the powers of their heart and soul, to improve the condition of the disinherited of this world, they would feel how unjust are the accusations of these false friends of the people, and would find that, on the contrary, there is not a country in the world where charity is more largely practised than in France, and particularly in Paris.

If selfishness produces at times frightful scandals, good works and charity offer, on the other hand, numerous and consoling examples. 'Paris,' said Count Molé, 'is the place of alms-giving.' There was never a more just definition; never was praise more merited; for in Paris charity has not overlooked any kind of distress. Take a man at any period of his life, and in any condition, enumerate all the calamities that could overtake him, and you will see that for every ill private charity has striven to afford relief.

A child is scarcely born before society begins to occupy itself about it. *L'Allaitement Maternel* and the innumerable institutions whose aim it is to succour women in their confinement are ready to look after both mother and child. Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, vie with one another in making the greatest efforts, the heaviest sacrifices, so that the arrival of the

newly-born in a poor man's house shall not be the beginning of a fresh trouble. One will give milk, another baby-linen, another will pay for the doctor and the medicines, and payment will be provided for the necessary expenses of baptism, and, later on, of confirmation.

L'Association des Mères de Famille, at the head of which figures the name of Madame Carnot, whom we are accustomed to see patronizing and assisting all good works, will ensure to the young mother the payment which she is not able to earn at the workshop during her illness.

Then there are the crèches, that will shelter the child while the parents are at work ; the dispensaries, where the best doctors will give their advice gratuitously ; the infant school, where competent teachers will awaken its young intelligence ; the Free School Fund, which, in a delicate and anonymous form, will provide it with clothes and the books it needs, and sometimes will even provide it with food.

When the child is grown up, there is that long list of professional schools, orphanages, societies for apprenticing and for the protection of apprentices and children employed at manufactories ; then there is the care of the stunted and scrofulous ; there are the Mariners' Hospitals, the Society for Providing Holiday Advantages, and the Society for the Protection of Women and Young Girls.

If the parents are bad characters, there is the Society for the Rescue of Children, the Society for the Protection of Infants, and the numberless institutions with the same object in view, which will separate the young from all bad influence, will adopt them, and in some cases will approach even the threshold of the courts to rescue a child more unfortunate than guilty, so that an education at once intelligent and generous may transform it into an honest citizen.

If from the child we pass to the man, what admirable provisions we find, of which we may well be proud—the Rent Society, and the Cheap Lodgings Society, to which M. Siegfried has attached his name; the Charity Clothing Club, the Loan Society, cheap bakeries, the sending back shipwrecked sailors and aliens to their own country, the night-shelters, the assistance by work, refuges, industrial schools, the office of the Miséricorde for the modest poor, masonic lodges, free dinners, scraps of bread, Society of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, public warming-places, free baths, assistance for the blind, the deaf and dumb, the mutilated, for the aged; homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor, almshouses for the aged, etc.

Even the convict on leaving prison may find help and protection. A single society—the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, over which M. Sénateur Berenger presides—distributes amongst them 80,000 francs a year.

Private charitable societies in Paris that devote their efforts to relieving distress may be counted by hundreds. Their annual expenses amount to several million francs, and yet accusations against the selfishness of the employers with *no bowels of mercy*, of the *over-fed* middle classes, *Jew* bankers, Protestant *hypocrites*, continue to be the foundation of speeches by which professional agitators seek to excite the passions of all the poor creatures who with difficulty gain their bread from day to day by hard labour.

'You must break into M. de Rothschild's cash-room,' says one; 'you must divide fortunes,' says another; and an honest author, in a newspaper* which is read by workmen, does not hesitate to write the following words: 'In principle we do not condemn mendicity, and we do not find it amiss that the disinherited in this life should

* *L'Autorité.*

remind with importunity the well-to-do of the too-easily forgotten duties of Christian brotherhood.'

But let them name a single country where the well-to-do better understand the duties of Christian brotherhood. French generosity! Why, it is before your eyes. You need only go into the streets to see at every step a hospital, an asylum, a school, a crèche, a refuge, an industrial school, an institution of some kind intended to relieve distress, and due to the generosity of a Rothschild, a Péreire, a Larochevoucauld, a Lambrecht, a Laubespain, a Baron Schickler, a Dollfus, a Hériot, a Furtado-Heine, a Boucicault, or of some business man who has made a fortune. 'I have seen people,' said Montesquieu, 'with whom virtue was so natural that it did not even make itself felt; they adhered to their duty without effort, and undertook it as by instinct.' Well, the name of these people in France to-day is legion.

High or low, all who are well-to-do seek to benefit the poor, and from their struggle to do good has arisen a new aristocracy, the aristocracy of charity, to which all, religious or secular, try to belong in these days.

And yet we must acknowledge that in spite of all these millions spent annually, in spite of all these good works, each one more touching than the other, the number of beggars, the number of those who, rightly or wrongly, ask relief, is growing every day.

I do not hesitate to say, and to say emphatically, that what we want to relieve distress is not money; it is organization. The sums gathered for the poor are sufficient, but the manner in which they are distributed is vicious to the last degree.

The channel of private charity has a leak; it is to the stopping of this leak that we must devote all our attention.

Works of private charity have all been induced by the manifestation of human suffering. Each society, only concerning itself with the special evil for which it seeks to find a remedy, tries to collect all the funds it can, but not one of them absolutely attains its object, which should be to give only to the needy.

All, without exception, are more or less taken advantage of by the false poor. They seem to be ignorant of the fact that *a good deed misplaced is a misdeed*, and that assistance given to a man who does not want it, so far from alleviating distress, only tends to encourage vice.

How can you suppose that a man will work twelve or fourteen hours a day to earn a salary of four francs when, with a little falsehood and a little audacity, he can, by calling at the office of a charitable society, at once obtain these four francs, even if he does not succeed in getting a larger sum allowed him?

As long as societies are managed as they are managed to-day, they will not only lose nine-tenths of their resources, but in granting assistance to the false poor they will maintain the leprosy of mendicity. 'The true way of helping the poor is to place them in a position in which they can do without help,' said Benjamin Delessert.

Owing to the way in which almsgiving is managed to-day, it is to the interest of the false poor to retain this title of *poor* all their life, for that alone suffices to bring them every kind of relief.

In short, we give much money, we do little good, and the robbers of the poor, the 'aristocrats of mendicity,' the clever ones who know how to wheedle us out of our alms, are the first to laugh at our credulity, I was going to say at our stupidity.

There was at one time at Versailles an old priest, excessively charitable, called L'Abbé Gérard. He did not

share the theories of the English bishop of whom I spoke at the beginning of this book, of that bishop who, at the moment of death, boasted that he had never given a penny to a poor person in the street.

L'Abbé Gérard gave to all who held out their hand to him, and it is said that more than once, having neither a sou nor a centime in his pocket, he was seen to give the very clothes off his back.

Happily, the faithful who knew their curé's generosity were ready to refill his purse. One Christmas Day, after vespers, the good Abbé Gérard saw one of the richest and most charitable of his parishioners come into the vestry.

'Monsieur le Curé,' she said, 'I was much touched by your beautiful sermon this morning about Christian brotherhood, and to prove that I understood your counsel, I have brought you a small donation for the poor.' And the lady put a one hundred franc note into his hand. The Abbé Gérard overwhelmed her with thanks, and immediately thought over the best way of employing this money. After much reflection, he decided to go and pay a visit to a poor workman, whom he had helped for many years without having yet succeeded in getting him out of his troubles. The workman lived at the other extremity of the town, on the fifth floor of an old house.

It was six o'clock in the evening. Great flakes of snow were falling, and the good Abbé Gérard was out of health. Anyone else in his place would have put off taking this trouble until the next day, but the Abbé Gérard was one of those to whom duty stands before everything. 'You double the value of help,' he often said, 'by giving it quickly.'

So off he set. After walking for half an hour, he arrived at his protégé's lodging. He slowly ascended the

dark stairs, stopping to take breath on each landing, when, arriving at the fifth floor, he heard himself addressed, amid cries of joy, by a gruff voice shouting, 'Here, turn round, Gérard!' The worthy Abbé, much surprised, listened attentively, and twice over he heard the same voice repeat the same words, 'Turn round, then, Gérard.'

The old ecclesiastic, more and more perplexed, pushed the door of his protégé's dwelling half open, and what was his stupefaction at seeing all the family and a few friends surrounding a superb *turkey*, which they were busy roasting, and to which in gratitude and irony the workman had given the name of the Abbé Gérard, his protector and his dupe.

And so it will be, as long as charity continues to be dispensed as it is dispensed to-day; as long as charitable institutions will not take the necessary steps to prevent the sham poor from simultaneously applying to all charitable societies, being inscribed at once on all the lists, and by these fraudulent means obtaining for themselves resources superior to those earned by the honest labourer, who, working from morning to night, often finds it difficult to procure the necessary bread for his family. To prevent this abuse, to give only to those who need—in this lies all the remedy.

Two years ago I took part in the International Congress at Antwerp, a Congress in which the question of mendicity and vagrancy was fully discussed by very competent men belonging to different nationalities. I had the great honour of being elected the chairman on this question, and in the observations I made at the Congress, or at a Conference which followed the Congress, I was led to speak of the frauds by which the false beggars in Paris know how to procure an excellent

income. When I told some of the anecdotes which I have related in this volume, I noticed that more than one person in my audience seemed to believe that my words were stamped with a certain amount of exaggeration.

‘You think I exaggerate,’ I said. ‘Well, I will give you the opportunity of testing my assertions. Come and live in Paris. Come, two, four, six of you; I offer all hospitality. You may accept my invitation with the less scruple inasmuch as this hospitality will cost me absolutely nothing. I undertake to give you board and lodging, to clothe you, to give you your return ticket, and I will sufficiently furnish your purses to enable you to indulge in many small luxuries. And all this, I repeat, will not cost me a centime, because you will provide everything for yourselves, absolutely everything necessary, merely by begging.’

My Belgian audience did not accept my invitation, but I was true to my wager, and, *before witnesses*, I proved that by begging you may meet all your needs just as well as by working.

My experiments have been made openly, and, although the campaign I have undertaken has already had the effect of putting my reader on his guard against the false poor, I am quite ready to begin them again, and I guarantee beforehand their success—that is to say, I undertake to get fifteen or twenty francs a day by begging only.

One night I put my hand upon a very precious document. It referred to letters addressed by different people to Madame Horny, the intelligent and devoted directress of the women’s night shelter in the Rue Saint-Jacques. There is every kind of thing in these letters by which it is sought to extort some kind of assistance from Madame Horny; there are even proposals of marriage. Excellent

individuals, small shopkeepers, well known and established in their locality, 'wishing to make happy one of those creatures whom fate has treated ill,' address themselves to Madame Horny to know if among her pensioners she has not a 'worthy victim of misfortune who would wish to marry an honest tradesman.'

The signer of one of these letters, a small shopkeeper in the Rue Galande, declares that if he applies to the night-shelter to find a wife, it is because he cannot leave his premises every day in search of one.

To prevent any doubt as to his identity, this suitor writes his request on the back of a black-edged letter a few months old, in which he informs his friends of the death of his wife. Amongst the proposals of marriage addressed to the night-shelters I have noticed several coming from beggars, especially blind men. These last one can better understand. The blind man especially requires a companion, and the physique of his future wife is of small importance to him. Provided she is good tempered and does not rob him too much, that is all he asks. That is why the blind, in their offers of marriage, are very laconic as to the qualities they wish to meet with in their future wife; but, on the other hand, they dilate with satisfaction upon their own qualifications.

'No doubt I am blind,' says one, 'but I am strong enough to bring up a family.'

'I never drink,' says another, '*and I gain eight francs a day.*'

I gain eight francs a day. There is an admission that should be noted, for it is of the first importance. A blind man, if he learned a trade—and it is well known that the society at whose head is a great philanthropist, Baron Schickler, has succeeded in transforming the blind into excellent workmen—would earn from two

francs fifty to three francs a day. By begging he will get eight francs a day.

I knew a young blind woman who was stationed for a long time in the Rue du Havre, before the Lycée Condorcet. This woman had a very interesting face, which sufficed to attract the notice of passers-by and to secure her a good living.

One day this beggar, the better to arouse the sympathy of the charitable, got a child of three or four years old to accompany her, and as the poor little creature ran the risk of being crushed by passing vehicles if he were left at liberty in the street, the blind woman fastened a string some inches long round his waist, so that the child was kept near its 'mother.' Can you picture a human being condemned in this way to remain motionless for whole days together? If a shop-keeper were to think of fastening a dog in such a brutal fashion to his shop-door, an agent of the Society for the Protection of Animals would at once intervene. But let it be a child, and no one protests. It needed a public denunciation to put a stop to this scandal which allowed the woman to coin money by torturing a child that was probably not her own. After this, you will not be surprised that blind people boast of gaining eight francs a day, and that we learn constantly from the newspapers that a police-officer, called to verify the death of a beggar, has discovered a small fortune in the dead man's mattress.

In order to arrive at an absolute proof of the use made of public charity, I was not satisfied only to show up all these abuses one by one, to unmask these frauds, and to denounce these crimes; I wished to try for myself, and to see what an inexperienced man could get by holding out his hand in the street. I say 'inexperienced'

because, if I pretend to know thoroughly the world of beggars, my readers will readily admit that, on account of my social position, and of my education and habits, I should necessarily meet with difficulties, and be hampered by a repugnance unknown to professional beggars. Well, in spite of these difficulties, I repeat that a day spent in begging has always brought me in comparatively important sums. By begging I have obtained for myself tickets for bread, meat, chocolate, and milk. I have procured clothing, medicaments, money for my rent, and railway-tickets.

Name any kind of object—an armchair, a violin, a pair of spectacles, a wooden leg, a child's cradle, a bouquet of flowers to adorn your table—and immediately I will get them offered to me, before your eyes, by a charitable society.

For you know that there exist societies or charitable persons in Paris that give sofas to the paralyzed; societies which give musical instruments to unfortunate artistes; societies which give spectacles to the short-sighted or to the long-sighted; societies which give cradles to the newly born. There even exists an association of young Protestant girls who have had the kindly idea of joining together and subscribing to buy flowers, which they take to poor young girls who are ill. If these flowers went only to the poor sick girls, how heartily I should applaud the effort; unfortunately, you need only have lived a little in the beggar world to know that this is not the case.

As soon as the association of which I speak became known, there was formed by the side of it, and naturally unknown to it, another association, whose mission it was to trade upon the first; and so it comes about that flowers destined to cheer the garret of a poor sick girl,

or to adorn the tomb of a little child, are sold in the evening at the doors of night restaurants by young girls sometimes under fifteen years of age, and who, till two o'clock in the morning, roam about the Boulevards. If the young Protestants who founded the Flower Mission could take part in the inquiry to which I have devoted myself—if it were possible for them to penetrate where I have penetrated—they might more than once have recognised amongst the beggars offering flowers to those at supper the sick girl whom they went to visit in the morning in her garret. The pale face and interesting expression—that *ensemble* of signs denoting suffering which served in the daytime to attract the young Protestant girl's sympathy, will serve at night to attract the notice of those at supper.

Ah! young ladies, the object of the eminently charitable task you have imposed upon yourselves is not always obtained. Generally speaking, the charity passes to-day beside those for whom it is intended.

It is to prove this assertion that my experiences have been of service. As I said before, a lie cleverly uttered, or a simple disguise, suffices to procure for you by begging all that you can require.

I was playing the part of a professor without pupils one night, about nine o'clock, before the Trois-Quartiers shop. In a single hour I received two francs fifty. At half-past ten I installed myself as a paralytic in the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas, and I gained twenty sous. At midnight I opened the cab-doors at the entrance to the Montagnes Russes, and I took one franc ten centimes.

I kept myself for whole days à *l'œil*, as the beggars say. The receipt is very simple, and you can try it.

If you want some soup, you are only embarrassed in

the choice. Every morning certain big restaurants on the Boulevards make a great distribution of soup at their doors. By this act of charity (?) the heads of these establishments find a way of atoning for the sins they have committed in fleecing their clients. Go to the door of one of these restaurants, place yourself at the end of the line, and you will soon receive your portion. If, like many beggars, you are in the habit of getting up late, and if you prefer to have your first meal in the middle of the day, you have only to present yourself at the door of the barracks. I specially recommend to you the quarters of the Garde Républicaine at the Palais de Justice. I went there one day; I installed myself upon the bench in front of the gate at the foot of the clock, and there I was served in a tin box, with which I had previously provided myself, a full measure of excellent soup, as well as a piece of bread.

I know men employed by the town in sweeping streets, clearing gutters, and others, who have for long been regular customers for this soup. Why should they go and pay twenty-five centimes at the eating-house opposite for a dish of soup of a questionable quality, when the soldiers with a smile upon their faces gratuitously offer them appetizing soup, enough to maintain a man's strength for half a day?

Should you wish for a more complete meal, then you have the Bouchée de Pain and the restaurants of the Rue des Grandes Carrières, where you will find charitable persons, who, without asking either your name or address, without troubling themselves to know whether you are poor or a ne'er-do-weel, will provide you with food and drink gratuitously, as they did myself.

Should you prefer a cup of tea or a biscuit, there are eight or ten lecture halls where you can find this tea,

with a religious sermon into the bargain. But, you will say, that is all very frugal! These meals are very untempting! Do you think, then, that the meals are very sumptuous which a poor, honest fellow who depends only upon his hands for a living himself pays for? Do you think that the ordinary meal of that poor mother of a family is very appetising, who, in the winter, when it freezes hard, passes half the night in breaking the ice of a stream to earn two francs? Upon those two francs she may often have to live, she and her little children, and to pay her lodging and dress herself.

Besides, in speaking of soup distributed at barrack doors and the meals obtained at the Bouchées de Pain, I wished only to cite the means of getting food which are within the reach of all. Do not be uneasy; the beggar who knows his craft scorns those meals as he scorns the ticket for the soup-kitchen.

‘ Les brouets des fourneaux, festins nauséabonds
Par la philanthropie offerts aux vagabonds.’*

The blind man on the bridge, the paralytic, the crawling cripple, the workman out of work who has ‘had nothing to eat for three days,’ the child whose ‘father is in the hospital and whose mother is without work’—all these starving people, who would often be much embarrassed if you asked them to eat a piece of meat before your eyes; all these false poor are very particular about their food, and only eat at good places.

Look about in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and you will find there a restaurant frequented by small clerks in Government offices, who devote themselves every day to a careful study of the menu, in order to

* Extract from a piece of poetry by a beggar. Translated in prose it runs thus: ‘The thin broth of the soup-kitchens, nauseous banquet offered by philanthropy to vagabonds.’

succeed in making a meal which shall not cost more than 1 franc 25 centimes. These clerks work; they know that the month is long and that money is hard to earn. It is all the harder to earn since they are not allowed to undertake a multitude of small accessory works by which they might augment their income. Were you to see the principal clerk of a Minister keeping the accounts of the coal merchant opposite, what indecorum!

The Administration do not consider whether the unfortunate clerk has a wife and children to provide for. No; they do not enter into these *details*. The one matter of importance is the man's *tenue*,* and that is often a very cruel word in their mouth. And the poor little clerk often contents himself with a breakfast at 40 centimes and a cup of coffee. With the bread, the small decanter of wine, the napkin, and the tip to the waiter, the meal soon amounts to the sum of from 1 franc 10 centimes to 1 franc 25 centimes. But go through this same room in the restaurant about ten o'clock at night, what a different picture! The customers then no longer choose the cheapest things on the bill of fare. They select what pleases them most; the small decanter is replaced by a *sealed bottle* of wine; dishes succeed dishes, and the dinner ends with coffee, which is again followed by a glass of liqueur. These gentlemen who are dining are the beggars; all the cripples and pretended cripples of the rich Madeleine district are there, consuming the day's gains, and I beg you to believe that their bills are larger than that paid in the morning by the Government clerk.

I know a beggar who has lost both his legs. From a professional point of view, that is what is called a *fine*

* Deportment and appearance.

infirmity. This unfortunate creature is condemned to walk on his knees. I pity him with all my heart, and I acknowledge that he is in the category of the infirm for whom a livelihood should be provided at the expense of society, but in some other way than by authorizing him to beg. I will indicate in the second part of this volume the assistance which I suggest should be given to cripples and to the infirm. Meanwhile, this man begs, and his 'fine infirmity' allows him, no doubt, to realize important sums. I have dined, more than once, next to him, and I frankly acknowledge that if I allowed myself to follow his example, and to model my meals on his, there would soon be a deficit in my budget. I am often obliged by my occupations to get my meals away from home. I breakfast or dine frequently in the neighbourhood of the Saint Lazare Station. I know nearly all the restaurants of that part of the town and their prices. At one time I occasionally breakfasted in the Rue d'Amsterdam at an English restaurant; the cooking there was excellent, but the price was rather beyond my purse. I left the establishment; but one fine day, to my great astonishment, I saw a blind man go in there who regularly begged at the Porte Maillot, and who twice a week took the eleven o'clock train, went to the restaurant in the Rue d'Amsterdam, breakfasted there for 4 francs and read the *Figaro*, for my blind man, though the victim of a bad eye disease, saw well enough there to read his newspaper !

The blind usually get a good income ; and that is intelligible, their infirmity is so appalling.

One day I was invited to dine with a family of beggars, whose address an eminent artist, a friend of mine, had given me. The family consisted of four persons: the husband, formerly a model, simulated paralysis, and

played his part admirably ; the wife, who enjoyed excellent health, professed to be a workwoman out of work ; the daughter used the baby as a means of begging ; and, lastly, the fourth person was blind.

Of course it was as a beggar that I made the acquaintance of the head of this family, who always believed, and believes still, that I am by profession a strolling musician. If presents maintain friendship, in the beggar world treating to a drink creates and develops it with surprising rapidity. In a fortnight, thanks to a few moistenings, the false paralytic and I were quite intimate. Accordingly, one day he invited me home to dinner. We had, besides, to *talk over business*. I accepted, and went to Gozlin. To say that the dinner was appetizing would be to exaggerate ; but I assure you it was without bounds—abundant. At dessert a good bottle was uncorked in my honour. As I expressed surprise at this luxury, the false paralytic exclaimed : ‘ You will be able to pay us back for this when you know your trade better and take larger sums. Besides, you need not scruple to accept it, for it is the blind man who is treating us. He lives with us, paying for board and lodging six francs a day !’

I have already said that I would undertake as a beggar to procure every imaginable thing. One must of course know how to beg, because, I repeat it, mendicity is a profession—I might almost say a science.

Some months ago I wrote to the Surgical Aid Society, asking for a wooden leg for an inhabitant of the Alpes-Maritimes, who really had had a leg amputated, and was deserving of pity. The principal secretary of this society, with a promptitude for which I was profoundly grateful, paid immediate attention to my request, and gave a wooden leg to my protégée. My declaration was

sufficient to obtain this result. Well, this is precisely what I criticize. My declaration is quite enough to certify that the man in whom I am interested is deprived of a leg, but there is nothing to prove that this man has not already taken advantage of his misfortune, by securing for himself relief of every description; there is nothing to prove that this man has not thus gained the military medal. What I oppose and want to prevent—what I should be certain in a large measure to prevent by the system I am going to propose—is nothing else than the multiplication of charitable relief to an individual.

Certainly, to carry on the business of ‘wooden legs’ one must begin by having one’s leg amputated, and everyone has not this misfortune; but without having the slightest infirmity, you can secure for yourself charities of considerable value.

Suppose that a native of Nice, living in Paris, wishes to travel to his native country without the necessity of paying his railway fare. The means are very simple. He goes to a deputy or to a senator of his department, and once in his presence, he tells him he is very unfortunate, that he finds himself without work, that he knows no one in Paris to help him—in short, that he wishes to be sent back to his own country, and he asks this deputy to recommend him to the préfet of police. The deputy, too happy to get out of the difficulty so cheaply, takes a sheet of paper stamped with the address of the Chamber, of which there is always plenty on his desk, and writes a note to the préfet of police in which he recommends the man X. to his notice, ‘who is in all respects worthy of his benevolence.’ The man X. goes to the Préfecture, where he shows his letter of recommendation. There they think it is to the interest of everybody to get rid of

an indigent fellow who has not been able to find work in Paris, and who, if he stays in the capital, will end by being supported by public assistance, or perhaps even in prison. So they give him at once an order for the railway ticket.

If the man X. is an intelligent fellow he will have taken care to go to the Préfecture dressed in rags and nearly bare-foot. As soon as he has received his railway ticket he will say to the clerk, 'But you see my miserable condition; I am shoeless, I have not a centime in my pocket, and I am hungry.' The compassionate clerk will see that he is provided with a loaf of bread and a pair of boots, and money, varying from one to three francs, for refreshment on his journey. The man can please himself as to whether he uses the railway ticket or sells it; for the administration which is so generous in the matter of restoring people to their own country forgets the essential thing—that is, it neglects to have the indigent man, who has asked to be sent back to his home at the expense of the tax-payers, accompanied to the train. If this very simple precaution were taken, people would not be seen at all the stations, who offer you railway tickets at an absurdly low price, which they have procured in this way, and for which the companies will obtain repayment from the departments traversed.

The clever beggar very often, instead of going to the Préfecture of Police to ask to be sent home, will go to an influential personage connected with the railway company, and get a permit to travel half price. Armed with this permit he goes to the senators and deputies of his own or the adjoining departments, to charitable people or societies, to the curé or the pasteur; if necessary, he calls at the association of former pupils of his

lycée, and there he asks them to give him the money necessary to pay his half fare.

What deputy is there who has not been the object of this kind of solicitation? Of course the ticket is never used; in the beggar's hand it serves as a letter of introduction or even as a certificate of poverty, thanks to which he may take in people. I had a conversation one day with a préfet of police about this traffic in tickets.

'In these days,' I said, 'a man who knows Paris can procure a railway ticket at a very low rate, just as easily as anyone walking in the Boulevards, in spite of your laws and your agents, can get, at all hours, playing cards of a particular kind, or the photograph—how shall I express it?—*very décolletée* of any dancer of the Moulin Rouge, or even the photograph, always *very décolletée*, of more than one actress belonging to a certain class of theatres. You prohibit this kind of photograph, I know, but that does not prevent their being sold everywhere. To procure them you must know the likely places, and must know how to inspire confidence in the seller when you present yourself. Well, then, it is just the same with the railway tickets, and I know *ticket offices* where they sell them at a reduction.'

The préfet seemed to think I was exaggerating, but as I wished to prove that I knew what I was talking about, I set to work at once, and a few days afterwards I sent to the Préfecture of Police a ticket from Paris to Bordeaux, which I had bought at the Orleans Station for six francs and a half, and which bore the signature of the préfet of police. It was a ticket delivered in pursuance of an order given on the recommendation of some deputy to a so-called indigent person, who, after having received two francs for his support during the

journey, sold his bread, his pair of shoes, and his ticket, and procured thus in one day nine or ten francs, without counting the pence he perhaps picked up at the station by begging of the passengers.

But, it will be said, to procure these tickets, these clothes, and this assistance, you must work very hard. You must go here and there, see deputies or senators, walk all over Paris in every possible direction. Indeed, your beggar's day appears harder than that of any worker.

That is also my opinion. No doubt, if some beggars gain large sums, many would find it more advantageous to work regularly than to beg for public charity, just as it would be more to the assassin's interest to behave honestly than to commit the crime that will bring him to the scaffold.

A very interesting work might be written on this subject, 'The Assassin's Craft.' Georges Montorgueil once touched upon it in one of his articles in the *Eclair*.

He informs us that very often the advantages realized by assassins condemned to death or imprisonment are less than the amount earned in a day's work of the most humble description. At times the crime has cost more than it has realized.

Let me quote from this article :

'A band of ruffians is just now making its way into country houses. They "do" the plate with incredible dexterity. M. Goron was talking of this to a thief who was brought to his office, a man whose fiftieth robbery it was, and who said to him : "*Monsieur le chef de la Sûreté*, you would not believe how we thieves are robbed. We carry off a silver dish from a house : say it is worth twenty thousand francs. The receiver of stolen goods awaits us ; his furnaces are ready heated for melting

down; he gives us at once fifteen hundred francs for it!" and the thief added, calling upon M. Goron to bear witness to this denial of justice: "Do you consider that honest?" The magistrate and audience could scarce repress a smile when Dutilleul before the jury gave his word of honour that he was speaking the truth.

'This same Dutilleul, who was acquainted with the trickeries of assassination, records in his memoirs the following circumstance. They had murdered a poor old woman at the house of a curé. They had knocked her on the head and burnt her alive, and then had looked for the money while she smouldered. They managed to collect twenty francs in coppers. One louis for a work that had required preparatory study, no small expense, a night spent out of doors, an act of dangerous violence, not to mention the consequences, which for one of them was hard labour, and for the other death! There were two of them: that made ten francs for each. Did that pay?

'Dutilleul was a mason. The day's work of a mason averages six francs, and night-work counts double. That particular day, if he had kept to his own work he would have gained twice as much, would still have been a respectable man, and would not have gone to prison. Is it, then, a paradox to say that it is more profitable to be a mason than an assassin? The assassin's trade has never made a living for anyone but the hangman.'

And G. Montorgueil goes on to enumerate a series of crimes which have brought in to their authors an average of from 28 to 30 francs, and sometimes nothing at all:

'Crimes for twenty francs,' he says, 'for a hundred sous, for three sous, for a cup of coffee, for nothing—what a lucrative profession! Can one understand old

Mrs. Berland having placed her son in the assassin's profession, when apprentices are required everywhere, earning money at once? A vile lot with sad returns! Oh no, it certainly is not a trade to teach a child.'

No, it is not a trade to teach a child; and yet, as G. Montorgueil also said: 'It is very noticeable that while so many workmen are striking, assassins abstain from following their example.'

The venerable Abbé Crozes, the former chaplain to those condemned to death, who has attended the last moments of so many wretched people whose end was the scaffold, said to me one day: 'They commit murder from two motives only—for revenge or to get money.'

Go and say to a man who hopes, by breaking into a safe and by killing a bank clerk, to realize a fortune that will allow him to live comfortably to the end of his days: 'My friend, it would pay you better to earn four francs a day than to risk going to the scaffold.' No doubt it would be more to his interest to work honestly; but if he takes the risk of the crime, the reason is that he is persuaded that he will not be discovered, and that he will succeed in getting a good round sum. To make his fortune, that is his one idea. With the beggar, the one idea is to do no work. There are people so set against all work that they prefer the most miserable existence to tying themselves to any regular occupation.

On the quay of the port at Naples, if you ask a lazzarone who has just had his dinner to carry your portmanteau, he will send you about your business, saying, 'I have dined.' From his point of view, as soon as a man has satisfied himself with food he has no further need to work.

What a number of lazzaroni we have in Paris!

lazzaroni living not in the glorious sun of Naples, but in the mud, the snow and the dirt, sleeping in summer in the underwood of the Bois de Boulogne or beneath bridges, and in the winter beside plaster-kilns, and at times even in the gutters!

Arrive in Paris by the Lyons or Orleans line, take a cab, put your trunk on it, and say to the driver, 'Take me to Neuilly,' and one of the lazzaroni will immediately start and follow your cab. He will run hard seven, eight, nine kilomètres in the hope of being able, when he has arrived at Neuilly, to help you to unload your trunk, and in this way to earn a few sous.

Offer this poor man regular work in a manufactory or workshop and he will refuse it. He is a professional beggar, a sworn enemy to work, and prefers to live the most miserable life rather than submit to the discipline of a workshop. That kind of beggar is the habitual client of night-shelters and of the depot; he regularly claims the barrack soup, he picks up ends of cigars on the Boulevards, he sells transparent cards, and when seized with hunger he runs behind cabs to unload the luggage.

If there should be an old lady in the cab, and if the old lady wishes to be taken to a rather deserted street, of which there are many in the Parc de Neuilly, you may be sure that the expedition will not have been unremunerative.

The beggar, after having taken down the trunks, will ask three francs, and if the old lady demurs, thinking the sum absurd, the beggar will insist that it was at her invitation that he followed the cab. 'You beckoned me, madam; I have run hard for nine kilomètres, and you say that I do not deserve three francs. Well, let us go to the police-station.' So the lady will give him three

frances, for you may be sure the driver will remain neutral during this discussion. There is no danger of his taking the old lady's part. He knows that these cab-runners belong to an association with which it is just as well to keep on good terms.

It is quite time to put an end to all these abuses ; it is quite time to end this traffic in public charity ; it is quite time to understand, at any rate, that money intended for the needy is sacred money, which to the last centime should serve to relieve real distress, and not to maintain the indolent and the vicious.

The ' tithe ' appropriated out of public charity by the false poor nearly swallows up the whole sum. A stringent remedy is necessary. It is this remedy which I humbly purpose to suggest, with the deep conviction that it will have the happiest practical results.

PART II.

THE REMEDY.

IN order to avoid all ambiguity, we will begin by distinctly stating what the evil is that needs to be remedied.

To abolish mendicity certainly does not mean to abolish pauperism. The abolition of pauperism is one of those dreams that may have haunted the brains of the tender-hearted; but it is only a dream. No doubt there is much to be done with regard to social reforms. I believe that, without being a partisan of State socialism, one might, according to M. Baudrillart, say that 'Society should be kind-hearted'; but as another economist, M. Frederick Passy, has remarked, 'Society must not, under pretext of being kind-hearted, give way to thoughtless sensitiveness, and with the view of relieving distress, adopt means the only effect of which will be to aggravate the evil.'

There are some politicians who, by way of helping those whom they term the 'working classes,' make constant appeals to State authority and to statutory regulations. They forget that in placing humanity in every case under guardianship, the State will become, as Mr. Bentham says, an institution of children's nurses for the use of grown-up people.

The State has the right to intervene to insure safety to the labourer in the factory or the workshop ; it has the right to intervene to protect women and children ; it is its duty to encourage and, if necessary, to promote the creation of works of mutual assistance, of forethought, and of economy, but without forgetting that in these cases individual initiation can alone ensure final success, because it alone is capable of throwing heart and soul into the work to which it has itself given birth. France may be said not to be behind other nations in these ideas. In later years immense progress has been effected ; and since the day when M. Floquet, President of the Council, created at the Ministry of the Interior a department for the general management of *l'assistance publique*, on all sides, under the influence of enlightened philanthropists, the charity societies, the societies for mutual help, co-operative societies of production and consumption, for retiring pensions and tontines—in a word, all associations whose object it is to help the weak and the insignificant—have lately obtained a position most successful and encouraging.

But whatever is done, there will always be human waste ; there will always be the indigent and the needy, who, by reason of a lack of energy or of foresight, of some infirmity, of want of work, or even of a fault or an inveterate vice, will find themselves at some time without work, without bread or shelter.

An appeal to charity for all these unfortunates is a just right. To come to the relief of all who suffer is a social obligation ; for charity is not only a Christian virtue—it is besides a civic duty. ‘The State,’ wrote Montesquieu, ‘owes to all citizens the right of subsistence.’ And the Declaration of the Rights of Man says : ‘Public assistance is a sacred debt. Society

owes subsistence to unfortunate citizens either by providing work for them or by finding the means of existence for those who are incapable of work.'

La Rochefoucault-Liancourt, in the statement he made to the Constituent Assembly of the principles that had inspired members of the Committee of Public Assistance, said : ' Hitherto assistance has only been regarded as a favour ; it is a duty, but this duty can only be fulfilled when the assistance supplied by society promotes the general well-being. If a man has the right to say to society, " Give me the means of living," society has equally the right to say to him, " Give me your work." '

This, then, is the problem put shortly—those who can work should gain their bread by the sweat of their brow. That bread will be proportioned to their effort or to their intelligence. As to those incapable of work, it is the duty of society to guarantee their means of subsistence ; but no one has the right, when able to gain his living by work, to expect to be supported by his fellow-creatures. The right to eat has, as its corollary, the duty of work.

The question is, How to put these principles into practice, and how to distinguish at once the real from the false poor.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST REFORM.

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The first necessary reform, without which it will never be possible to diminish the number of the poor, consists in the total, absolute, and radical suppression of alms-giving in the streets.

This reform, I do not blind myself to the fact, will be the most difficult to effect of all those I shall have to point out, for in this case, instead of addressing myself to skilled persons—to reasonable men who know the weak side of charitable works—I address myself to the public, to the masses, and the public does not reason; it allows itself to be guided by its feelings; it will be very difficult to make it understand that in giving two sous to a ‘poor person’ in the street it is doing a bad action.

It is just because I am aware of this difficulty that I have multiplied anecdotes and examples in my book, and that in a series of lectures delivered in different places I have tried to begin a crusade against the evil which is called *alms-giving in the street*.

We have just acknowledged that we should only give to those who are in want—to those who cannot work, or who, being able to work, are for the time being without employment. Who can say that the man who holds out his hand to us in the street is in this situation? Do not the examples I have cited in this book, and the experiences I have undergone, and which I declare upon my honour are all authentic, strike you as being conclusive on this point? You have here a man of the world who sets himself to study carefully, from life, the Parisian beggars. During ten years, not allowing himself to be discouraged either by personal distaste or by threats, he affiliates himself to all the ragamuffins of the capital. He visits night-shelters, he eats barrack soup, he stations himself at church doors, he penetrates into the most infamous slums and the most dangerous haunts. By turns blind, deaf and dumb, paralytic, crawling cripple, organ-grinder, cab-door opener, he trades upon charity in all its forms, and always returns with his pockets full.

He makes these experiments in the light of day and

before witnesses ; he offers to try them again if required. Is not that enough to satisfy you ? What more do you need to convince you that most of the people who hold out their hand to you in the street are trading upon your good nature ? And when this same man has just told you that, after having taken part in the orgies of the false poor, he has seen the really poor die of want and hunger—the modest poor, the honest workmen, burdened with a family or broken down with illness, all those who struggle on to their last moment, never venturing to hold out a hand to passers-by, and not even allowing their neighbour to guess the frightful circumstances with which they are struggling—do you not feel that, in continuing to give to these adventurers the money with which you might help the really wretched, you are committing more than a fault ? You are committing a crime, for you become an accomplice of an evil that you might prevent.

Ah ! I know what answer I shall get. No doubt I shall be told we know well enough that in giving two sous in the street to a man who pretends he has had nothing to eat for three days, we may nine times out of ten be scandalously deceived, but we have also a chance of doing good. Perhaps the wretched man speaks the truth in protesting that he has not eaten for three days. We continually read in the newspapers of men or women who, with strength all spent and worn out with suffering, have tried to end their lives by jumping into the Seine. Are you sure that the beggar who implores your charity is not one of these, and that the two sous which you denounce us so harshly for giving him will not have the result of saving him from suicide ? Alas ! the contrary is the truth. For the coppers that you so liberally distribute in the street amount to millions,

which only serve to encourage idleness and vice, whereas I would have them employed in relieving real want.

But the argument is not without force. The human heart does not reflect. When we find ourselves confronted by what we believe to be real want, we feel bound to help the victim, and it seems to us that in giving a few coppers to the unfortunate being who implores our charity we are really doing a good action.

How many times it has happened to me, in order to find out what a beggar gains, to pass the whole night sitting on a bench in front of a café restaurant, or, concealed in a carriage, occupied in watching the mother of a family nursing an infant and holding out her hand to passers-by.

Whenever I saw a sou dropped into the beggar's receptacle, I was reminded of a man in a hurry getting out of his cab at a café who orders a meal for the driver in return for having brought him quickly to his destination. The horse suffers, the driver gets the refreshment. It is the same with the beggar. It is the baby who suffers and shivers with cold, who gets bronchitis or inflammation of the lungs; it is the baby, who by his poor, pinched face, hollow eyes, and shiverings, excites the commiseration of passers-by, and, for the sake of the child, two sous are given to the mother, which she will often go and spend in drink at a wine-shop.

But, you will say, you do not mean to maintain that amongst all the beggars there is not a single needy one? By no means. I admit that there are some rare exceptions. Yes, the charity you give in the street may sometimes fall into the hands of the really indigent. And the remedy I am going to propose will enable every one to satisfy his conscience.

CHAPTER II.

SUBSTITUTION OF TICKETS FOR MONEY.

THIS remedy consists in replacing the two sous, or even the scrap of bread, by special tickets. Here again an explanation is necessary.

The kind of ticket which I propose has nothing in common with the tickets for bread, meat, or vegetables, which are distributed by soup-kitchens. The idea of giving these tickets was certainly a step in advance, but we must not forget that in the matter of charity each time that progress is made the professional beggar also progresses on his side, with the object of rendering illusory the precautions of charitable persons.

It was thought that as the beggar often transforms the penny which is given him for the purpose of buying himself bread or meat into wine or absinthe, it would be wiser to replace the money by tickets for bread or meat. Unfortunately, the beggars who wish for money and not for bread or meat are quite equal to selling their tickets. You need only go to Place Maubert, or on the Quays of the Seine, or to any place where the collectors of 'orphelins'* sell the produce of their harvest, and you will find there a veritable market of tickets for bread, soup, meat, coal, etc. Those for which you paid a penny are sold again at a reduction, according to the market, so that with this system you do not prevent the evil you wish to suppress. You need, besides, only notice with what contempt the beggar accepts your ticket to convince you of the truth of what I say, and you will easily understand this con-

* 'Orphelins' is the name given to the ends of cigars or cigarettes collected in front of cafés.

tempt now that you know that your scrap of cardboard really represents only four centimes to the beggar.

The system which I wish to see organized is very different, for its effect would be to give the beggar a ticket that would be personal, and which could not be sold. That is the system which has been inaugurated by the Union d'Assistance of the sixteenth district. This charitable association, presided over by M. Léon Say, and which is administered by a council, at the head of which is M. de Crisenoy, former Councillor of State, has in a very simple way got over the difficulty which had to be surmounted.

When people wish to be able to give immediate relief to destitute persons whom they meet in the street, they can buy tickets for bread, meat, or soup for ten centimes at the Union d'Assistance. A beggar comes and tells you he is hungry, you give him one or two of your tickets. The beggar, furnished with the card, goes at once to the mayoralty of the district, where the agent of the charitable society is always to be found. He presents his ticket, which is taken from him, and in exchange they give him an order available for that day only. A baker's shop and a restaurant are to be found opposite the mayoralty, which forthwith give bread and soup that the man must consume on the premises. With this system the really hungry beggar need only go a few steps to get to the place where he can eat his bread and soup, but before eating it, he will have to show himself to the society's agent, who will in a few days know the faces of all his clients.

Suppose a man should have procured twenty-five or thirty tickets, he could only exchange four or five of them in a day, and so, to use up his thirty tickets, he would have to appear six times before the same clerk,

who, if he perceived that he had to do with a professional, would refuse him the stamp, without which the ticket is valueless.

If—and this will happen to you not unfrequently—the wretched man who implores your charity be only a professional beggar, he will take good care not to appear at the mayoralty where he is known. In this case the ticket is lost so far as he is concerned; but it will not be a loss to the society, which will in this way have in hand ten centimes, which may be employed in helping the really needy.

The Union d'Assistance of the sixteenth district has had the happiest results. All the intelligent people of Passy have taken part in the schemes, and at church doors, as well as in the street, the penny is replaced by the *personal ticket*. And the professional beggar leaves Passy, where henceforth he will find nothing to do. It is not worth while to beg all day for a piece of bread and a plate of soup merely. It is only the really needy who accept such relief; and these accept it the more readily, knowing that the Union d'Assistance of the sixteenth district has other means in addition for relieving those who are worthy of their interest. Let there be formed in every quarter of Paris an analogous institution to the one existing in Passy, and charitable people who have only a few coppers to dispense in charity will have the satisfaction of knowing that their penny will really represent a piece of bread or a plate of soup, and that in no case can it be transformed into absinthe or tobacco.

CHAPTER III.

ORGANISATION OF ASSISTANCE BY WORK.

It is evident that one cannot expect to save a man from distress by giving him a piece of bread or a plate of soup. The relief we shall henceforth give in the form of a *personal ticket* is only intended as a preliminary help to those who are starving. But in the majority of cases, to render real service to one who solicits our charity, we must do more, and put our hands deeper into our pockets. It is here that we introduce assistance by work.

A man stops you at the corner of a street; he tells you he has a wife and children, that he has no money and is hungry, and that those belonging to him have eaten nothing since the day before. What is to be done? You are tempted to give this poor man a franc, or two or three francs. This would be an excellent thing to do if the man who receives it has told the truth. But if this man lies—if he has neither wife nor children; if, instead of dying of hunger, as he pretends, he has one or two hundred francs in his pocket; and if he goes to a wine-shop in the Rue des Anglais or the Rue Harvey, and drinks the two francs you gave him—you will agree with me that your charity will have had a result diametrically opposite to that which you intended. What can we do to ascertain whether this beggar speaks the truth? how, in a word, distinguish the genuine from the professional beggar? Well, there is a complete remedy—one which is known and proved, and is infallible. This remedy is work. Work is the touch-stone that will enable us immediately and certainly to

test our man, for the beggar may be thus defined: *He who has vowed never to work.*

This definition reminds me of an anecdote I read the other day in the 'Mémoires Secrets.'

During the last century 'M. de Marivaux was in a carriage in attendance upon someone when a man of from eighteen to twenty years of age, fat and well nourished, with a fresh, ruddy complexion, came to the carriage-door asking alms. M. de Marivaux, struck with the contrast between the young man's action and his appearance, turned to him and said: "Are you not ashamed, wretched fellow, young as you are and the picture of health, to demean yourself by begging the bread that you could gain by honest work?"

'The young man, abashed by this rebuke, answered, scratching his ear and half sobbing: "Ah, sir, if you only knew how lazy I am!"

'M. de Marivaux took six pounds from his pocket and gave them to him. Laziness was a fault he forgave, and the man's frankness deserved a recompense.*

Mendicants of to-day resemble their ancestors in everything but their candour. All are lazy, but not one will acknowledge it.

Some years ago a society was started in Paris under the name of L'Œuvre des Commerçants. The members of this society agreed mutually to refrain from giving alms, but at the same time they decided that anyone in distress, recommended to them by the manager of any charitable society, should be immediately employed during three whole days at four francs a day, and even kept longer, if it were possible. Here are the results of

* Anecdote of Marivaux, told by Métra in the 'Correspondence Secrète,' vol. v., p. 245.

this experiment, narrated, I think, by M. Maxime du Camp:

Seven hundred and twenty-seven applications were followed by 727 offers of employment at four francs a day. Out of these 727 applicants 312 only accepted the letter of recommendation that would have found them work, and 174 went to call at the houses indicated to them. So, out of 727 soliciting help, and professing to be ready to accept no matter what employment, 553 deserted immediately when it was proposed that they should work at four francs a day. The 174 who persevered were admitted into the houses to which they were sent.

Thirty-seven, having worked half a day, claimed their two francs to go and get their mid-day meal, and did not return. Sixty-eight had the courage to work until the evening, gained their four francs, and never reappeared.

Fifty-one were heroic enough to work for two days, but such unusual exertion having exhausted their energy, they were seen no more.

Eighteen victoriously stood the test, and stayed in the houses where they had been temporarily employed.

Thus, out of 727 individuals who begged from passers-by, there were only 18 who deserved that others should interest themselves in their welfare. The remaining 709 were volunteers of idleness who lived by trading upon charity.

Now, supposing that the 709 professional beggars had each reaped a harvest in sous of two francs a day; that makes 1,418 francs, which means a sufficient sum to enable those eighteen really unfortunate persons, whose only request was for work, to live for twenty days.

It would be difficult to lay too much stress upon examples of this kind, because they confirm the propo-

sition I have always maintained, that what we lack for the purpose of relieving distress is not money, but organisation. We have enough money, but we distribute it badly. Instead of giving it to the needy, who are incapable of lying, we give it to adventurers, who, in order to cheat us, have recourse to every means and every infamy.

So, then, work will enable us to unmask all these robbers of the poor. At Mulhouse in Switzerland, at Paris, at Lyons, everywhere where societies are organised to replace money given in the streets by assistance given in work, the same happy results have followed.

Offer work, and the false beggars will disappear. I have long made the experiment at my house. A beggar rings at my bell.

‘I am a poor workman out of work.’

‘You are welcome, my friend; come in. You have arrived at the right moment. You are looking for work, and I was just wanting someone who would work. Do you see that pump in the garden?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Very well; you will first pump, and then water the lawn. I will pay you at the rate of forty centimes an hour.’

‘But, sir, it is freezing.’

‘So much the better; you will make yourself warm.’

‘Oh, it is not for myself that I say that. I am concerned about your lawn. Water will injure it.’

‘You need not trouble yourself about that. Set to work bravely.’

‘Forty centimes an hour. That is agreed.’

The beggar takes off his waistcoat, moistens the palms of his hands, and begins to pump. He has started work. How long will it last? From five minutes to a quarter

of an hour, according to the individual; I have rarely known them pass the quarter of an hour. Generally speaking, the beggar profits by the near vicinity of the door to escape without asking for the few centimes which are due to him for the small amount of pumping he has done. That man will never come to me again.

Yes, my pump is well known in my neighbourhood. It preserves a justly-merited reputation, and renders me incalculable service. One of my friends, who lived in the same street as myself at Neuilly during a summer season, said to me one day: 'I notice something I cannot account for. Beggars, who are so numerous in this district, go down a street zigzag ringing at all the doors, but always missing yours. One would suppose that they knew you.'

'They know my pump, my dear friend, and that is enough for them.'

One day, however, a beggar revenged himself upon my system in a somewhat intelligent fashion.

It was winter. It was piercingly cold, and the pipes of the water company were frozen. A beggar rings at my door-bell.

'I am a workman out of employment. Since yesterday I have not——'

'Very well; I understand; come in. Here, my good man, nothing is given that is not worked for. Do you see that pump? Go and draw forty buckets of water.'

'Where shall I put the water?'

'I will show you. Here is a child's bath; you will fill it.'

Then I had all the jugs in the house brought out, and everything for holding water that I possessed, and set them in a line in the garden.

'You will fill all these with water, and also the little

reservoir in the kitchen. When you have finished, you will be given twenty sous, a plate of soup, and a glass of wine. It will take you two hours. Will that suit you ?

My man sets to work. I watch him from my study, and upon my word, I find that he works well. I say to myself : ' Here is a man one ought to try to help.'

By the end of an hour and a half he has finished his task. The cook gives him a plate of soup, a piece of bread, a glass of wine, and a twenty-sous piece, and being a good-hearted woman, who did not share my opinions about begging, she adds a cup of coffee to this frugal meal.

The beggar eats his soup with good relish ; he eats his bread, drinks his wine and coffee, and puts the twenty sous in his pocket ; then, taking a bucket of water :

' Your ape,' says he—the ape was myself—' took me for an idiot. I will teach him that I am more generous than he. He asked me for thirty buckets of water. Here are thirty-one ; this one is for full measure.'

And as coolly as possible, in the presence of the horrified cook, he pours a full bucket of water into my *pot-au-feu*, and into all the saucepans in which my dinner was cooking. I had given work to this man ; the work irritated him, and he took his revenge.

Wherever charitable institutions for assistance by work have been organised, the same phenomenon has been noticed.

Everyone knows Pasteur Robin's labour home. M. Robin is a philanthropist who has very quietly and wisely created a most useful institution, which serves to-day as a model for all establishments of the kind. Persons affiliated to this good work receive tickets bearing the address of the home, with a particular number

in figures. These figures take the place of the name of the person affiliated. You meet a man in the street who begs alms of you.

‘Why do you beg?’

‘Because I have no work.’

‘Very well. Here is a ticket which will admit you into a labour-house. In this house, where you can stay for a fortnight, you will be given board and lodging and your washing. You will be warmed and cared for. From seven o’clock in the morning until twelve you will be free, and can use your liberty by going to seek employment in a workshop of some kind. At noon you will return to the home, where you will breakfast; then you will work until seven o’clock in the evening. This work you will give in return for the hospitality shown you.’

What an excellent system! All the unfortunate people who are received into Pasteur Robin’s institution are helped out of their difficulties. If they possess a little energy or a little goodwill, they will soon be on their feet again. For each beggar that you send into the home you will owe one franc fifty. By means of this sum, once given, you are assured that your protégé will receive board and lodging *for a fortnight*, for the work to which the man will be subjected in the afternoon will suffice to make up the cost.

I am one of the associates of this work, and what do you think I have proved? That five times out of ten the beggar refuses my ticket on one pretext or another, and when he accepts it he generally does not use it. By the end of a month I have distributed ten or twelve tickets, and when the collector of the institution calls on me, instead of claiming ten or twelve times one franc fifty, he asks payment for scarcely more than one or two tickets.

On January 9, 1892, a man knocked at my door, and left with the maid the following letter, which I copy word for word :

‘ SIR,

‘ I take the liberty of writing you this letter, for I understand that you give cards for admission into a house where work is procured for the unemployed.

‘ Sir, I do not come as a beggar pleading poverty, but as an honest workman out of work, who comes to ask it of you as a favour ; for it is nearly two months since I have been able to find any, which makes me wretched, and is certainly very bad for me ; for I shall soon have nothing left, and shall have to sleep in the open air, which seems very hard, as it will be for the first time.

‘ I come then, sir, to beg you to give me a card of admission into this good house where the wretched are made happy, for giving work is the best possible charity.

‘ Sir, I shall call again myself to fetch the answer, unless you send it to me ; but to save you the cost, as I have, unfortunately, time, I will come back.

‘ Awaiting your answer, I have the honour to be, sir,

‘ Your respectful and devoted servant,

‘ GEORGE R — — .’

Does not this seem to be an interesting man ? He does not beg, he asks for work, and so thoughtful is he that he even says he will call again for the answer, so as to save me the cost of a postage stamp. He is one of those unhappy men to whom you would have given a twenty-sous piece. But I gave him a ticket for a labour home, and said to him : ‘ With this ticket you are sure of being lodged and boarded for a fortnight. Go to the address I give you, and if at the end of a

fortnight you have not succeeded in finding yourself work somewhere, you may come back to me, and I will occupy you at my house during another fortnight.' At the same time, I wrote to Pasteur Robin to recommend my protégé specially to his notice.

This happened on January 9 at mid-day. On the 11th the superintendent of the home wrote to me :

' SIR,

' I regret to inform you that your protégé, George R——, has not appeared at the labour home.'

On January 13 comes a further letter from Pasteur Robin's representative. It runs thus :

' SIR,

' Your protégé, George R——, has at last come to the house. He had supper and went to bed. Yesterday morning he came in for breakfast, but when it was a question of doing some work he took himself off.'

Do not think that this was an exception, for I might cite hundreds of examples of the same kind.

On April 28, 1893, a man brought the following letter to my house, which was badly expressed and badly spelt :

' M. PAULIAN,

' I beg that you will forgive me if I take the liberty of writing you a few lines. I have just been in the hospital forty-four days, and I am without work or any kind of resource. I beg, sir, that if you should know of something to give me to do, or be able to send me as a waiter or to run errands, as I shall get into a good place the first fortnight in July. Meanwhile, I will do what I can find, so as to give bread to my children.

‘I tell you, sir, that they have turned us out of our house because we owe sixteen francs for the room, and they keep from us the little linen we have, and we can’t change. My poor wife sleeps with some friends, waiting for better times.

‘Sir, I beg you to take pity upon our sad condition. I thank you a hundred times in advance.

‘Your most humble and devoted servant for life,
‘WINTER ALPHONSE, Mechanic.

‘Please answer to Monsieur votre Concierge or to the bearer.’

I make this man come in, and cross-examine him. I soon perceive that I have a professional to deal with. A few days before this he had called at my house, and they had unfortunately given him two francs. He naturally returns to the house where he had received alms. I ask him to show me some papers to prove his identity. He takes from his pocket a leather case, and lets fall a small note-book, which I pick up. It was the ‘little game’ or list containing some addresses of charitable persons. I am much distressed at finding my own name on the list. I at once definitely make up my mind, and give my beggar a one-franc ticket for the Union d’Assistance of the sixteenth district.

The next day but one I receive the following note from the Union d’Assistance :

‘The man named Winter, to whom you gave a one-franc ticket, has done no work.’

It is always the same story. The professional beggar complains of being without work. He is, in reality, without work only because he refuses to work.

Shall I give more examples ?

In 1890 we had a terribly hard winter. The Government, by way of helping the destitute, of whom there must have been very many that year, conceived the unfortunate idea of establishing in the general exhibition buildings in the Champs de Mars a large night-refuge. They began by admitting people for the night; then they took them in both day and night; then they gave them soup; then charitable ladies brought them warm clothes, and pious ladies distributed religious tracts. The rumour very soon spread to the world of beggars that they had only to betake themselves to the Champs de Mars to be lodged, clothed, and fed. Regular gangs of people, who numbered in their ranks more strapping fellows than old or decrepit ones, invaded the refuge of the Champs de Mars, where, during whole weeks together, hundreds of men were seen passing their days in 'playing with corks'* and smoking cigarettes, for the manufacture of which, for want of the proper paper, they employed the leaves of religious tracts.

At last the Government began to wonder, not without anxiety, how they were to get rid of all these idlers. 'I could never have believed,' said a member of the Government, in the lobby of the Chambre des Députés, 'that there were so many destitute people in Paris.'

'Destitute people?' I replied. 'What a mistake, sir! Call them sluggards, and you will give them their right name.'

What passed afterwards proved that I was right.

One day there were 700 individuals in a single refuge in the Champs de Mars. Pasteur Robin offered cards for his labour home to these 700 individuals. 'You have

* A game played by putting sous upon corks and then aiming at them either with another sou or a pebble.

no work,' he said to them. 'Come to me. You will be free all the morning to seek employment; in the afternoon you will make for me small bundles of firewood, and in exchange I will give you board and lodging.'

Do you suppose that all these unfortunate people thankfully accepted Pasteur Robin's offer? Not at all. There were only 100 who accepted; and out of this number nearly half were not long in repenting of their good impulse, for only 55 candidates came to M. Robin's home. After two days' work these 55 were reduced to 11.

Seven hundred *men out of work* received relief in the Champs de Mars. To these 700 *unemployed workmen* an occupation is offered—a means of earning their bread by work which is neither too long nor arduous, and only 11 candidates accept this proposal. Is not this enough to prove that these men, pretending to be out of work, were beggars by profession, incorrigible vagabonds, idle fellows, antagonistic to all work and discipline, victims of that particular disease which Dr. Benedict calls 'claustrophobie,' and which we may more clearly designate as 'abhorrence of all regular work.' These people require air, space, perpetual movement from one place to another, the unforeseen, absolute independence, and the most complete idleness.

During this same winter of 1890, in the same Champs de Mars, while hundreds of men out of work were playing with corks in a gallery of the exhibition, a well-known French artist, M. Henri Motte, was painting in an improvised studio over their heads his beautiful decorations for the Moscow Exhibition, which a few months later were to win for him the cross of the Legion of Honour.

An immense studio was necessary for painting those long pieces of canvas, and that was why the Administra-

tion of the Fine Arts had authorized the artist to install himself in the Champs de Mars gallery.

One day M. Motte, to judge of the effect of his colours, wanted to spread out his painting before him. He needed the help of a dozen, fifteen, or twenty men during an hour or two. Below him he sees this crowd of unemployed and idle men. He goes down and asks who are willing to help him. 'There are twenty sous to be earned for a work of an hour or two. Who will come?'

No one answers.

The artist renews his offer two, three, four times, and with much trouble he succeeds in securing three men! Once again, do you not see that giving even a simple meal, merely a piece of bread to a healthy man who can but will not work, is an unwholesome action from beginning to end? And this is why there should be organisations of *assistance by work* in every town, in sufficient numbers to enable all the destitute, whether men or women, to obtain immediate relief.

These organisations of 'assistance by work' will naturally assume different forms, according to the kind of relief they propose to afford. Some will be night-shelters, others workshops, others general refectories; but all will be based upon the same principle, viz., that of replacing alms by an offer of work.

I would not abolish either the night-shelter or the scrap of bread, but I would put an absolute stop to their being given gratis. In place of the sign-board which might be rendered thus: 'Here all the idle will be lodged gratis, on condition that they say they are destitute,' I would stick up a notice-board on which might henceforth be read: 'Here all who are willing to work will be provided with board and lodging.'

But it is not sufficient to proclaim the principle of

assistance by work ; we must know, too, how to put it into practice. What work shall we make them do ? At what rate shall they be paid ? What is to become of the things that are made ?

Partisans of gratuitous assistance seem to take pleasure in complicating the question ; they foresee difficulties which only exist in their own imagination. To hear them talk, you would suppose that we were proposing to establish national workshops without limit, out of which would pour every day immense quantities of manufactured products, that would tend to encumber the general market. That is not our intention. It is not a question of creating national workshops, but of giving occupation, of one kind or another, to those one wishes to assist, *even if the work they are given be a useless one*. It is necessary to make the able-bodied beggars understand that in this world nothing is obtained for nothing.

A man knocks at the door of your night-shelter. It is night, freezing outside, the man is chilled with the cold and is suffering ; you admit him, you make him warm, and give him a bed for the night. So far so good. But the next morning, why do you let this man go away without claiming payment for at least part of the hospitality he has enjoyed ? Do you answer that he has no money ? I am quite aware of that ; but then it is not money that I ask of him, but work of some kind, an effort, a proof of his good disposition. This man can saw wood, he can unwind old ropes, he can make paper-bags.

You have mattresses in your night-shelter, and you have the wool picked every year by a regular mattress-maker, who, thanks to the employment of a machine, will very soon reduce your wool to small shreds. Why do you not every morning have two or three mattresses hand-picked by the pensioners of the house ? But these

mattresses have covers, the beds have sheets and blankets. Might not all these things be cleaned in the establishment? If necessary, could you not have the floors washed with soap and water? Could you not get the windows cleaned in such a way as to make each pane of glass shine like the windows of a house in Holland?

All this will not bring in very much, I know; but this obligatory work will suffice to keep away professional beggars from your shelter, and it will have the very great advantage of enabling you to distinguish between well-disposed persons and incorrigible idlers, who consider your shelter a hostelry, which one may enter without a 'By your leave,' and from which one may depart without a 'Thank you.'

It often happens that a scheme of assistance by work will take the form of a factory or workshop, as, for instance, Pasteur Robin's labour-home, or the factory of the Batignolles-Monceau Society for assistance by work, presided over by such good men as MM. Lalance, Gaufrés, and Bompard.

In that case it will be indispensable to grant pensioners their full liberty in the mornings, so as to allow them to look for work. The occupation to which those assisted are subjected should be of the simplest character, so as not to necessitate any apprenticeship; but it must be made hard enough not to tempt the pensioner to wish to stay too long in this shelter, which is, and ought to be, only a temporary refuge.

Some directors of philanthropic works display to their visitors with satisfaction the luxury of their establishment. This luxury is a fault. The bed of the night-shelter should be hard, the meal of the charitable home should be frugal. Not only luxury, but even comfort, should be banished from these establishments. It must

not be forgotten that we have to do in this instance neither with the sick nor the impotent—of these I shall speak later—but with the able-bodied, who profess to be in want, and who often owe their poverty to nothing but their misconduct and carelessness. It would be supremely unjust if, under pretext of charity, the man who does not work, or who works only irregularly, should be better treated than the honest workman who never takes a holiday.

‘Is it possible,’ it may be said, ‘that you consider that people are too well treated in the night-shelters?’ ‘Yes, they are too well treated.’ That astonishes you, but it is a fact. I can imagine my reader’s surprise, and it is natural, when I think that though everybody in France takes an interest in the poor, very few people have the opportunity of studying them from life.

‘Night-shelter.’ The very name seems to denote a melancholy abode, and whose heart would not be touched in passing the women’s refuge in the Rue Saint-Jacques? ‘How must those wretched women suffer when, as night falls, they come to knock at that door!’ I do not object to that. The night-shelter ought to evoke in every mind the idea of suffering, abandonment, despair. I understand well that the sign of this philanthropic house should move your deepest pity. I admit for the moment that all the pensioners of the night-shelters are worthy of your compassion. But there are also in the same city of Paris, in the evening, hundreds of poor people who, having worked bravely all day, have for their nightly rest nothing better than a dirty pallet, compared to which the bed of the night-shelter is an unheard-of luxury.

There are men who, having swept the streets all day in the rain or snow, are by the evening wet through

and numb with cold. These poor men very often do not possess a change of clothing. To warm themselves they must get into bed, and as a bed with sheets and blankets is expensive, these poor wretches are obliged to be satisfied with half or a quarter of a bed !

Go into the Sainte-Margu rite Street, and you will find there a furnished lodging of this description. In a moderate-sized room there are five or six beds placed against the wall, and in each bed three places ! A large black line made on the wall with coal shows the space allotted to each individual. At all hours of the night the customers arrive. The man is exhausted with his labours. By the light of a smoky lamp hung to the ceiling, he undresses himself and puts his wet clothes on the floor in the midst of all kinds of filth. Then he lies on the bed by the side of a sleeper whom he does not know, and who may happen, being thus suddenly awakened, to receive the new-comer with kicks and thumps.

Enter one of these crowded rooms at two o'clock in the morning when fully occupied ; try to stay there a few minutes without becoming asphyxiated, and, leaving there, go into a night-shelter where all the beds are clean, all the sheets very white, all the blankets carefully disinfected.

The lamp that lights this large dormitory allows you to notice that the walls are whitewashed and the floor well scrubbed. Each man before going into the dormitory has to submit to a complete change of clothing, and while he sleeps the clothes that he will put on in the morning are dried and cleansed—and here the hospitality costs nothing.

You must acknowledge that all those poor creatures must be endowed with a strong sense of pride who

prefer, to the gratuitous and comfortable night-shelter, the third of a bed at twenty centimes in the den in the Sainte - Marguérite Street. But take care. If you multiply indefinitely the number of *gratuitous* night-shelters, you will multiply indefinitely at the same time that class of *destitute folk* who find it quite natural to sleep in the night-shelter and to feed at the barrack doors.

With regard to charity there is a line very difficult to draw, but within which we must keep, at whatever cost, if we are not to do more harm than good. It is that the condition of the man obtaining relief should not be a subject of envy to the man in work ; if not, the poor man who is struggling with all his strength to gain his bread will end by thinking that *begging is more profitable and easy than working*.

Some institutions for assistance merely give occupation to the poor during the day. That is the case in the workshops, where they give neither food nor lodging, but where they simply provide work that can be done in the shop itself. That is the kind of work which best suits the poor who are not alone in the world, the woman who has a child that she cannot leave alone, the man who has a family to support. In this case the wages are paid in money ; but here, however tiresome it is constantly to repeat the same thing, we recommend that the wages should be fixed at a rather low rate, so that all those who come to these establishments should be induced to employ all their energy and capacity in finding more remunerative employment.

These workshops ought also to be as small as possible, so as to harbour only a limited number of persons. It is of primary importance to avoid the accumulation of large masses, which immediately compels the application

of a severe discipline, and requires on the part of the managers qualities which it is not always easy to find amongst the humble class of persons employed. And then again, in the interest of the poor people, it is much better to have a number of workshops distributed over a large area than to have a big central one which necessitates changes of residence, often very difficult and troublesome.

One of the workshops of this kind which, it seems to me, would be a good model, is that of Javel. Situated at No. 129 *bis* of the Saint-Charles Street in the fifteenth arrondissement, in a most unpretentious house, this workshop has nothing in its appearance to make it attractive, and yet since it was started, in the space of a year it has provided 14,945 hours of work to ninety workwomen. The workshop is open every day from twelve to six o'clock, excepting on Sundays and holy-days. Women who are nursing their children are allowed to bring them to the workshop. Work is paid for at the rate of twenty centimes an hour. The women are given as much soup as they wish for. From time to time a distribution of linen and clothes is made amongst them, chiefly of shirts. One day in the week the workwomen are authorized to bring their own things to the workshop, and this work of mending and keeping in repair is paid for like the work done for the manufactory. Here is an excellent plan, well calculated to raise labour in the eyes of the poor seamstresses who complain, often wrongly, but also sometimes, we must acknowledge, rightly, of being unduly made use of by the middlemen who get orders from the large shops. Is not paying them for repairing their own things the way to make them understand in a most practical way the philanthropic character of the institution, whilst at the same

time it allows them to do something for their own welfare.

A woman carrying a child begs alms of you. If you consider her a deserving case you may give her a twenty-sous piece. If so, it will be at least three chances to one you will be cheated—that is to say, that you will give to someone who is undeserving. On the other hand, if you are an advocate of assistance by work, and you give this woman an admission ticket for Javel's workshop, how different the results will be !

In giving your charity through the workshop you will have saved the child the suffering and danger of being kept out in the street, and you will certainly not have been cheated ; for the poor woman who begs of you will have to work for five hours before receiving your alms. Money thus earned will not be squandered, whereas money given in the street is very often spent at the wine shop. During one winter 220 tickets of admission into Javel's workshop were distributed ; only ninety were used. Out of the 220 petitioners there were 130 who lied. It was that large-hearted woman, Madame Ferdinand Dreyfus, who at her own expense, and with the help of a few relatives and friends, founded and put into working order Javel's workshop.

For some years women have taken a more and more active part at congresses in which the great social problems are discussed. We must rejoice at seeing them take their share in those dry tasks which until now seemed to be reserved for men's consideration ; for this co-operation has effected some practical results of the greatest value. It was on returning from the congress at Antwerp, where she had followed all the discussions, both in the committees and public meetings, that Madame Ferdinand Dreyfus started her workshop,

thanks to which much real want has been relieved. How many other good works could I cite which have been thus inspired in kind-hearted women owing to their having taken part in a congress of one kind or another !

Labour institutions, like workshops intended for men, must be located somewhere, and consequently buildings have to be rented, and the cost of fitting them up is often very burdensome. One need only look at the accounts of all charitable undertakings of this kind to see how often a large part of the receipts is required for the general expenses, such as 'rent, firing, lighting, furniture, etc.' Impressed by this fact, some people have thought of employing the destitute in street work—sweeping, carrying away the snow, clearing pavements before shops, collecting the refuse in the streets, etc. The institution for assistance of the sixteenth district has organized this service in a very practical way. The associates of this institution always carry in their pocket-books small tickets in the form of halfpenny letter cards.

<i>Ticket when open.</i>	<i>Ticket when closed.</i>
Date _____	Union d'Assistance
Name _____	of the 16th district,
Address _____	The Mayoralty,
Sum _____ Fr. _____	from 2 to 4 o'clock.
No. P _____ No. O _____	

A poor man stops you and asks alms. You believe, after having questioned him, that this man is deserving of your consideration, and you decide to give him one, two, three francs, any sum you please. Instead of giving it to him in money, you fill up one of these tickets, and write on it the date on which you gave the ticket, the beggar's name, his address, and the sum you intend him

to have. You need not sign this card and so make yourself known to the beggar, for your *personal number*, which is marked in the lower left-hand corner of the ticket, and which is known by the society, will serve instead of your signature. The *order number*, which stands at the lower right-hand corner, serves to show you the number of tickets you have given. The ticket is gummed; you need only moisten the edges to shut it up. You give this new kind of cheque to the beggar, saying: 'Go to the Mayoralty of the 16th district between two and four o'clock, and you will receive such a sum in return for a few hours' work.'

The beggar goes to the Mayoralty. There he is received, not by a mere clerk, but by the manager of the office, a man chosen with great care.* The manager opens the ticket, verifies the number that stands for your signature, puts to your debit the amount of the cheque, and says to the beggar: 'I am told to give you a certain sum. You will begin by working so many hours, then I will pay you the money due to you.'

Thanks to the kindness of M. Babinet, civil engineer of the district, people, both men and women, chosen by this Agency are employed to sweep the public roads under the direction of the principal road surveyors of the town. These voluntary street-sweepers are not dependent for remuneration upon the town. They are paid by the charitable person who has signed the ticket, but the principal surveyor superintends them, and, their work being ended, signs a paper for them, on presenting which every beggar receives his wages.

* The Union d'Assistance of the sixteenth district has the good fortune to have as the director M. Logoguey, former member of the Superior Council of Public Instruction, who devotes all his leisure to this eminently philanthropic work.

That is the organisation. Would you care to know now what results it has produced? Listen to M. de Cresenoy, chairman of the organising committee: 'In a work such as ours one cannot expect to achieve the desired end in a day or two; we need time and perseverance. And yet, as regards the struggle against professional mendicity, the results have surpassed our anticipations; those members of the association who had been the most beset by importunate beggars of every description are now entirely free from them. One of their number, formerly traded upon by a gang of beggars inhabiting a part of the Pantheon, has since not seen a single one of them. A doctor, assailed in his consulting-room by persons who under pretext of illness came to tell him painful stories, and invariably ended by begging for assistance, has radically cured this new form of epidemic by a generous dose of your tickets. One of your members, specially exposed by his position to the assaults of the professional beggar, noticed that half the tickets given by him had not been taken to the office. The selection in this case was made by the beggars themselves.

'At the beginning of September a young man, giving the name of a celebrated lawyer who had been dead some years, brought us a closed ticket. He said he had two children, infants; that he and his wife had been out of work for several months; he only asked for work. He was told he might call again, and it was discovered that he had given a false name, was not married, and lived by begging. He applied, of course without success, to several of our societies, but probably to more purpose to other inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

* * * * *

‘The agency had received on February 29, 1892, 2,738 tickets, of which 300 were closed tickets. Of the 300 closed tickets, 74 had not been paid, the bearers having given false addresses or false information, or having been considered unworthy of receiving help. To this number must be added all those that the bearers did not care to bring to the agency, having understood what was meant by it. It is the same with the soup or bread tickets: the mere obligation of going to an office of the Mayoralty, or giving his name and address, and the impossibility of selling these tickets at a public-house, singularly depreciates them in the eyes of mendicants.’

Every three months, and oftener if necessary, the members receive the account of the expenses incurred by the payment of tickets that have been distributed, and as each ticket is provided with a different order number, the member, on receiving his account, can at once see which tickets have been presented at the office and which have been scorned by the beggar. What a number of deceptions are brought to light by the study of this account! Suppose you are affiliated to the institution at Passy; you have laid in a store of twenty tickets numbered from 1 to 20. You have distributed these twenty tickets, each of the value, I will suppose, of two francs, and you find after some weeks that only three or four tickets have been brought to the Mayoralty. Amongst your twenty poor there were sixteen professional beggars, who, rather than work three or four hours, preferred to destroy the two-franc ticket you had given them.

If you had given your charity in kind, that money would have been lost to you and would have encouraged the beggar in vice. Thanks to the organisation of

charity at Passy you will have saved that amount, which you can use in helping the really needy. This really needy person the institution will easily point out to you, for, by putting all applicants to the test of obligatory work, it will easily distinguish the good from the bad.

The bad will be discouraged. In the society's account for 1898 I notice that 74 men and 119 women, after calling at the Union d'Assistance with tickets, refused to work. Of course they were not given the value of the tickets, which amounted altogether to 600 francs. So there were 600 francs saved, with which some really poor persons could be helped. This is what the Union d'Assistance has done, which during the year succeeded in placing out 231 persons, without counting 888 others whom they aided either by direct assistance, or by measures or recommendations, which in a certain number of cases have effectually helped them out of their difficulties.

The object of the Union d'Assistance of the 16th district was to assist the poor of that district. But in proportion as other similar works were started a general understanding was arrived at, thanks to which the members of each union can send their beggars into any workshop. The central committee of work institutions, directed by Dr. Bouloumié, already give tickets which allow those who receive them to be admitted either into Pasteur Robin's Charitable Home, 36, Rue Fessant (formerly Rue Clavel), or that of the Batignolles-Monceaux, 17, Rue Salneuve, or into the Union d'Assistance of the 16th district (in the St. Germain Market), or that of the Mairie de Passy. In this way the beggar can choose the workshop nearest to his abode and avoid waste of time and useless fatigue.

If the movement in which we are interested continues,

we may hope that in a few years every district of Paris will be furnished with several workshops, in which all who complain of being in want could be temporarily received. When that day has arrived, those will be much to blame who prefer to give their charity in money to giving help through work whenever they have occasion to help an able-bodied beggar.

It is for manufacturers, members of the charity societies, representatives on elected bodies, for all who belong to the upper and middle classes, to urge forward and to bring into existence in their neighbourhood a work of this description. They should know that wherever gratuitous help has been replaced by assistance through labour, the same happy result has been noticed. At Lyons, Pasteur Aeschiman jun. founded a temporary home for work. He took as his model Pasteur Robin's home, and he succeeded in lodging and feeding his pensioners at the cost of nineteen centimes a head per day. The produce of the work nearly sufficed to balance the cost.

Is it not quite time to give up the gratuitous night-shelters and charity in the shape of alms that is often expended upon vagabonds unworthy of interest, even when it is not expended upon small capitalists?

A woman came one evening in tears to the door of the night-shelter in the Saint-Jacques Street. They took her in, comforted her, and gave her a bed. The manager asked her to take off her clothes so that they might be dried; the woman refused; they insisted, but in vain, and at last they discovered that under her dress, in a small pocket, the 'poor' woman had hidden a considerable sum in bank-notes.

You may be sure that if she had known that the next day she would be obliged to work to pay the price of the

hospitality she had received, the weeping woman would have gone to sleep in a hotel, and the bed she undeservedly occupied at the night-shelter would have been given to some poor soul more worthy of it, who perhaps passed the night in the streets.

The third reform that I propose, then, is very simple. It consists in requiring work of some kind from every able-bodied person who, complaining of being without work, asks either relief in money, or refuge in a night-shelter, or a meal in a free-dinner establishment or soup-kitchen.

It has always been understood by men of good sense that it is by work and not by gratuities that we should help able-bodied beggars; but how is this work to be offered if there are no establishments at our disposal such as those of Batignolles or Passy?

In the month of November, 1876, accompanied by M. Laroche Joubert the elder, deputy for La Charente, I was walking along the road which lies between the Castle and the Versailles Station. M. Laroche Joubert was a great manufacturer and a politician. He had the good fortune, uncommon enough in these days, to be beloved by his work-people and to be respected by his political opponents, the reason being that everyone knew that his name was synonymous with good works. But M. Laroche Joubert did good in his own fashion, that is to say, with intelligence. He had original ideas with regard to mendicity and almsgiving, to which he attached great importance. He maintained that charity should never be given in the street, in which he was right, but he believed that any man who in the middle of winter wore shoes that were in holes must necessarily be in want, in which he was perhaps mistaken. Moreover, M. Laroche Joubert was very fond of children.

On the evening in question it was very cold ; we were leaving the Chamber of Deputies, where we had been extremely hot, and we were quickly buttoning our overcoats to protect us from the blizzard that was raging out of doors, when a child of from twelve to fifteen years of age came up and begged alms.

‘I never give in the streets,’ M. Laroche Joubert answered with severity.

‘But, sir, I am hungry.’

M. Laroche Joubert scans the child, and sees that he is nearly barefoot. In such cold, he says to himself, this child’s boots are in shreds ; he must indeed be in want. M. Laroche Joubert puts his hand in his waistcoat-pocket for a piece of money, but soon hesitates. Almsgiving in the street—it is against his principles. What shall he do ? He is undecided. Then he suddenly takes off his overcoat, folds it together, and, throwing it over the child’s arm, says to him : ‘Follow me, and carry this overcoat to the station.’

All this took place in a few seconds

When he arrived at the station M. Laroche Joubert took back his overcoat, and, taking from his pocket twenty sous, gave them to the boy, saying : ‘I never give money to beggars. I give you twenty sous for yourself because you have worked for it by doing this for me. A minute ago you were a beggar, and I despised you ; now you are a worker, and I shake hands with you.’ The child was dumb with astonishment.

I only then understood what had passed in the mind of this excellent man.

‘What you did just now is all very well, M. Laroche Joubert,’ I say to him ; ‘but you know you have risked getting inflammation of the lungs.’

‘It is possible,’ he answered ; ‘but I have perhaps

turned a beggar into a worker, and that is well worth inflammation of the lungs.'

I have never forgotten that incident, which made a great impression on my mind, and which engraved itself deep in my heart. If I venture to relate it now, it is because I consider that it can only do honour to the memory of the man who was the hero of it. But now, happily, progress has been made, and charitable people who wish to substitute for blind almsgiving assistance by work need not risk getting inflammation of the lungs in order to reconcile their acts and their principles.

They need only buy a few labour tickets; they may address themselves to M. Bompard, general secretary of the Batignolles-Monceaux Institution (17, Rue Salneuve), and for six francs they will obtain a certain number of tickets, thanks to which they may do their charity with discretion.

'Mendicity,' as was well said by M. Gaufrés at the inauguration meeting of the Batignolles-Monceaux workshops—'mendicity is as much a calamity as a fire. You insure against the latter by paying a premium. You must insure against mendicity by buying a few labour tickets. Let everyone spend six francs a year on the tickets, and the number of professional beggars will soon sensibly diminish.'

Almsgiving in the street acts upon mendicity like those chemical manures so much in vogue in the present day, which double the produce of the harvest. The more that is given, the greater the harvest. Unfortunately, in this instance, the harvest is beggars. It is time to put into practice the well-known saying: 'The true way of helping the poor is to place them in a condition to do without help'; that is, to impose labour upon them.

CHAPTER IV.

REFORM OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND OF THE POOR LAW.

THE Préfecture of Police could by its own authority, and with a mere stroke of the pen, put into operation, in the matter of mendicity, a series of reforms, easily realized, the happy results of which would not be long in making themselves felt. I will briefly enumerate them.

‘What would you do,’ an eminent magistrate once asked me, ‘if you were préfet of police?’

‘If I were préfet of police I would begin by instituting a special brigade employed solely for the repression of mendicity.’

Everyone knows that in Paris police agents are appointed for special purposes. One brigade will be occupied with anarchists, another will keep a watch upon card-sharpers and clandestine gaming-houses. Certain agents will be charged to enforce the laws relating to public morals, others are only occupied with those who steal goods exposed for sale. This specialization is very wise; for if there is an institution where the division of labour is more needed than in any other, it is certainly the Préfecture of Police, which requires of its agents aptitudes differing according to the crime that needs to be suppressed, and even according to the locality in which they have to act.

If the ordinary policeman had to interfere every time that certain misdemeanours of a special kind were committed in the public street, the illegal arrests chronicled in a year would be numbered by thousands. The agent concerned with offences against public morality sometimes makes a mistake. How would it be if the ordinary

policeman were expected to distinguish between the honest woman and the prostitute? There are more cases than one in which his mistake would be excusable. A quick intuition is needed for this undertaking, and a habit which can only be acquired by devotion to this special work and constantly frequenting the same places and meeting the same people.

This may also be said with regard to card-sharpers who ply their trade in railway trains. Commission the ordinary policeman to suppress this offence; the chances are ten to one that instead of putting his hand upon the card-sharper, he would arrest a good citizen or a small clerk of the Government, who every morning in going from Saint-Germain to Paris plays his little game of cards with one of his friends.

So it is with good reason that a special brigade has been established. Why not create a special brigade called the 'mendicity' brigade?

Probably because it has been considered that mendicity is an offence easily recognised. This is a gross error, which has been the source of all the evil.

What is a 'beggar' *in the eyes of the law*? Not every one who holds out his hand; for there are cases in which 'the penal code unwillingly concedes that those incapacitated through poverty or want of work should preserve the most humble of all rights—viz., that of holding out the hand to passers-by.'*

Beccaria lays down the principle, in effect, that the penalty is only just so far as the offence is inevitable.

In places where no mendicity agency exists the decrepit may beg of passers-by, whilst the able-bodied is only punished when he makes a practice of begging.

* 'Considerations upon the Public Assistance of Mendicity.' Address delivered by M. Delmas, Advocate General, at the opening of the Court of Appeal of Toulouse, 1881.

How can a policeman know whether the man he sees begging is an habitual beggar? This policeman's duty is to look after a street or a district; he has no right to go outside his beat. To judge of a beggar he ought to be able to follow him about Paris for a whole day, perhaps even for a week. By this means alone would it be possible for him to know whether he has to do with the false poor or the professional beggar.

M. de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, in the Constituent Assembly, thus defined the poor: 'He whose needs are greater than his resources.' It follows that, in order to know if a man is poor, one must first know what are his resources, and the chief of all these resources is the produce of work. Hence the necessity of discovering whether the man works, and in the case where he does not work, the reason why he does not work. Is it because he cannot or because he will not? These simple observations suffice to show that the offence of mendicancy is not so easily discovered as is generally supposed.

But further; there exist beggars, and these are the most dangerous, who beg without ever asking for anything. They conceal their begging by the practice of some kind of trade. One will sell flowers, another boot-laces, a third pencils and key-rings. Better still, I know beggars who neither ask nor sell anything, who merely walk on the boulevard, and who thus find ample means of living.

Place yourself on the boulevard of the Madeleine between mid-day and one o'clock before the Trois-quartiers shop. You will see a man and woman arm-in-arm pass before you. The man carries a tool-box on his back, in which there are no tools. The woman leans on his shoulder with a feverish movement, a kind of St. Vitus's dance, that shakes all her limbs. These two

worthy old people, clothed in miserable garb, seem to be devotedly attached to one another. They have never been seen one without the other. They remind you of Philemon and Baucis. They go slowly up the boulevard, mutually supporting one another. And they never beg; but their wretched condition, and the woman's nervous trembling, the husband's white beard, are eloquence itself. When they pass purse-strings are loosed, and many pence find the way to their pockets.

I photographed that particular group, and I assure you that as soon as the woman found herself before my camera she had no more nervous trembling. The policeman who sees these good people pass says nothing, and can say nothing. If the special brigade of which I have spoken existed, the man and woman would long ago have been arrested.

For years and years the Préfecture of Police and the Public Prosecutor have mutually reproached one another for not having done their duty.

'Do arrest the beggars,' says the Public Prosecutor.

'When I arrest them you set them free,'* answers the Préfecture.

Yes, the greater number of beggars arrested by the police agents are set at liberty by the Public Prosecutor, or acquitted by the tribunal. And why is this? Because those arrests have been wrongly made.

Go to the sitting of the Eighth Chamber, and listen to the depositions of the police-officers. When you have heard one you will know them all, for all are framed on the same model.

The President: Police-officer, make your deposition.

* On October 28, 1885, the préfet of police informed the Minister of the Interior that out of 100 beggars arrested and sent for trial 55* were set at liberty. On July 5, 1886, a letter from the préfet of police again complained of the leniency of the tribunals.

Police-officer : On such and such a day, at such an hour, being on duty in such a place, I saw the accused in the act of begging.

The President : Did you see him receive anything ?

Police-officer : Yes, two or three times.

And there it ends.

A man begs ; he receives one, two, or three sous ; that is sufficient. The policeman arrests him ; would you have the court condemn him ?

Little children, with pale and pitiful faces, are brought before the court. These children are quite young, and incapable of earning their bread. No one troubles himself about them. They were hungry, and begged ; would you have the court sentence them to imprisonment ?

Oh, if only the police acted differently ! If, instead of bearing witness to the fact, they would show the cause, things would wear a different aspect.

I would have the police-officers commissioned with the repression of mendicity study every beggar individually, just as the police-officers study each card-sharper in a gang of players. I know more than fifty beggars in Paris whose names and ages I can give, as well as their addresses. I know their antecedents, their infirmities, real or simulated ; I know where they feed, where they pass their evenings, what they gain, what they spend—and why should not a police-officer know as much ?

It would be but a simple matter to divide Paris into a certain number of districts, each of which should be placed under the supervision and the *responsibility* of a special officer. Whenever a beggar is observed, the officer would follow him, study him, would make an investigation, and, according to the result of the investigation, would determine whether he should be arrested.

If that were done, you would no longer see the same beggar stationed during twenty-five years on the same bridge, or at the corner of the same street, without ever being interfered with, while sometimes a poor wretch is taken up for having received a single sou.

If the police-officer, instead of proving the material fact of begging, were to institute such an inquiry as I suggest, in most cases it would not be the beggar he would arrest, but the author of his begging—that is to say, his employer.

That is what would happen every time in the case of little children. If, instead of bringing before the tribunal those suffering and sickly little children of whom I spoke just now, who are reproached for having held out their hand in the street, the police were to bring to the bar the scoundrel who makes use of the child, and taxes it at the rate of three or four francs a day, and says, 'You will either bring me so much, or you shall be flogged'; if the police were to bring to the same bar the woman who hires children and the woman who procures them; if they arrested the professor of begging, the man who for the sake of gain forms a band of strolling singers, and teaches them the art of deforming their members and simulating infirmities, I am very sure that the magistrates would change their attitude, and, instead of acquitting, they would impose severe penalties.

I maintained this opinion before a meeting of jurists, and had the satisfaction of seeing that such men as M. Petit, Councillor in the Court of Cassation, and M. Cresson, former President of the Order of Advocates, supported my proposal to create a special brigade for the repression of mendicity. The police might do still more. They might forbid begging under entrance porches, which they allow to-day under the pretext

that the man stationed there is not on the public highway.

They ought equally to forbid begging at church-doors. In 1833 M. Gisquet, préfet of police, said : ' According to law, beggars stationed at church doors might be arrested ; the toleration shown them is based only upon considerations of convenience and opportunity. This toleration should be maintained so far as no abuse results from it, and so long as it is in accordance with the wishes of the ecclesiastical authorities.' Very well, then ; it seems to me that the abuse does exist. On days of big ceremonials (first communions, marriages, funerals) the church doors are literally obstructed by bands of beggars, who in an imperative tone demand alms. As to the opinion of the ecclesiastical authorities, it is well known. ' Beggars of that kind,' the curé of a big church in Paris, at the doors of which I had begged, wrote to me, ' rarely deserve the pity they meet with.' That is the opinion of all the ecclesiastics I have questioned on the subject. All declared that they would be glad to see driven away from the church doors those professional beggars who inspire them with no interest, and who draw away money that might be better employed in relieving real distress.

Why do they not take action at once ?

And what is to be said of the display of those horrible sores and those revolting infirmities, thanks to which they gain the pity of passers-by ? Is there not here, too, something to be done ? They receive into the home at Nanterre men in the full tide of their strength who profess to be without work, and ought the man who is the victim of an incurable infirmity to be turned away ? Either that infirmity is real, and the man so afflicted should be receiving public assistance ; or it

is feigned, in which case the culprit deserves severe chastisement.

The Préfecture of Police has only repressive functions. In more cases than one it intervenes to protect the young, the weak, and the unfortunate. But, alas! when it turns its hand to charity, it is no more happy than when it employs repressive measures. Shall I give an example?

The Préfecture of Police sends back many people to their own province who fail to get a living in Paris, and wish to return to their home. This is managed with more generosity, as the expense of the journey is defrayed by the departments passed through.

It is all very well to send an unfortunate individual back to his own village who is starving in Paris, but it would be as well also to take measures to see that the man to whom they give a ticket of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or even sixty francs really profits by the ticket he has solicited, and the cost of which will be borne by the honest taxpayers, who would be only too happy if they could make such a journey free of cost.

Prudence demands that all those who wish to be sent home should be conducted to the railway-station by police-officers, and that the ticket, instead of being given to themselves, should be put into the hands of the guard, whose business it should be to make certain that each man went to the station indicated on his ticket. By this simple precaution that traffic in railway tickets of which I have already spoken would be avoided.

Here, then, is a series of reforms easy of accomplishment. Why should they not be realized?

The Assistance Publique itself should make some effort to contribute towards this great work of repressing mendicity. The Assistance Publique is an old, rich,

and powerful administration which does much good, but which might do a great deal more if, by a better employment of its funds, and especially by a more strict control, it would devote to the really poor, the really unfortunate, the large sums which the aristocrats of mendicity are allowed to steal.

When I speak of the Assistance Publique I do not refer only to the administration of that name which has its headquarters in Paris. I intend to include all official assistance, whether employing the funds of the State or those of the department or of the town of Paris, or whether employing the income of the Assistance Publique properly so called ; for in order to arrive at a sound distribution of relief the co-operation of several agencies is necessary. At present that co-operation does not exist. Each administration is occupied with a particular class of distress, and devotes to this all its resources, without troubling itself to know if there may not be other forms of distress more worthy of relief.

How often have we not heard it said by a poor father burdened with children, 'If I were only a thief leaving prison, something would be done to help me ; but I am only an honest man, and there is no money to help honest people' ! And that workman was not altogether in the wrong, for funds devoted to the relief of the discharged prisoner are sometimes larger than those destined for the relief of certain forms of distress.

In saying this I do not mean to criticise the societies who assist discharged prisoners. I would certainly not be guilty of such a fault. I would have near every prison a Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, and I can say with truth that, within the small limits of my strength and resources, I have helped as far as I have been able the development of societies of this kind.

But just as the discharged prisoner, by right of his previous conviction, has the advantage over the honest man of drawing from the funds for discharged prisoners (which, moreover, are augmented by State aid) the money intended for discharged prisoners, I wish that the honest man, he who is really in want, should have the advantage over dishonest persons of obtaining from the funds of institutions for public assistance the money intended for honest but unfortunate persons.

But that is not the way in which things are done at present. Charitable relief does not go to the most deserving, to the most needy—it goes to the most crafty. How many unfortunate people there are who ought to be living upon public charity, but who, in order to procure a lodging and a piece of bread, are obliged to get themselves sent to prison. How many rogues there are whose right place is clearly in prison, and who live by depending upon public charity.

Take a blind man, for example.

In Paris, in fact, if not by right, the blind are authorized to beg. Is it a spectacle worthy of our age, to see a blind man—that is to say, the most unfortunate of men, and who will be so for the rest of his life—stationed on a bridge, the whole day long, for the purpose of imploring commiseration from the passers-by? By annual payment of 360 to 400 francs the society might manage to place that blind man in a country family; with that pension not only would the welfare of the blind man be secured, but also that of the family to whom he was entrusted; in the same way as in placing deserted children in the country, good is done both to the children and to the worthy people who undertake to bring them up.

But the *official assistance* answers that it is not in a

position to give 400 francs to every blind person, and so the unhappy man places himself on a bridge, holds out his hand to the public, and—obtains 1,500, 1,800, 2,000, and at times 3,000 francs and more from that very community which pretends to be unable to give him 400 francs.

And with these 2,000 or 3,000 francs the blind beggar is more to be pitied than any other creature in creation.

It is the fashion just now to pass what are called *lois ouvrières*, labour laws. The intention is to protect labour and the labourers. Every day there is legislation to regulate something. It is even maintained that a workman of the age of twenty-five, educated, in the possession of his arms and legs, who has the right to become a member of a union, who has the right to strike, and who at times has recourse to violence to secure what he calls his just claims, is incapable of self-defence, and that the legislature should determine in advance the basis of the contract which is to bind the workman to his employer.

But when it is a question of a blind man who has had no instruction, who from physical causes is unable to go and join a union, or to defend himself, there is no law for him, no protection. At all events, let charitable people understand this, that the blind beggar must gain 5 or 6 francs a day in order to live even miserably, for this of all occupations is the one which others trade upon most largely.

Every morning he is led to his usual place by a 'conductress,' who comes at stated times through the day to take him away to his meals.

The woman, you may be sure, does not do this out of charity. She gets paid for her services—and highly paid. It is often she who lodges and feeds the blind

person. How does she feed him? With *scraps* bought from the 'plungers'* of big restaurants, and composed of the leavings on the plates of their customers.

For fifteen sous a day the conductress feeds her man, and for his lodging, or rather his bed—for this lodger of necessity passes most of his life in the street—any hole is good enough.

There are commissioners who inspect factories, shops, and lodgings, in order to secure that all who reside in them should live in sufficiently healthy conditions.

I should be curious to know whether any police-officer has ever thought of seeing for himself the loft, cupboard, or hole, in which many blind beggars are condemned to pass the night.

And yet, as I said before, public charity gives to the blind on an average four times as much as would be necessary for him to live at his ease. But here again, for want of sufficient organization, the money given goes not to him, but to his employer.

If you only knew the tricks these poor blind people have to devise to save a few twenty-franc pieces from the clutches of their employers! You often see the blind being led by dogs. Sometimes you may see some going alone. These are the victims of the conductress, who, sick of being preyed upon by others, have resolved to live alone and manage for themselves. Alone they go into the street, alone they live from dawn to dark, alone they seek at night the room they have succeeded in hiring. But this solitude will not last long. Soon there will come a time when, after a fall or an accident of some kind, with which the conductress will perhaps have had something to do, the blind man will again

* By 'plunger' is meant the person who plunges plates in acidulated water to cleanse them.

have to use a guide who will consume most of his income.

Again, why not give to the indigent blind what the Bureau de Bienfaisance call help necessary for staying at an asylum—that is to say, 30 francs a month? As I said before, by placing the blind with families in the country, in the provinces, where living is cheap, society would ensure the material well-being of all these unfortunate people, and would impose upon itself a charge of 360 to 400 francs a year for each person thus relieved. If, on the contrary, the blind are left on the streets, a charge is indirectly levied upon taxpayers to the amount of 1,500 to 3,000 francs for each blind person, the unfortunate are left to suffer, and those who trade upon them are benefited.

What I say of the blind I say of all those miserable creatures who display their loathsome infirmities before the eyes of the public. For whom, I ask, are all those refuges, charitable houses, infirmaries for the incurables, if not for the disinherited ones of this life, whose condition makes it absolutely, evidently, and certainly impossible for them to gain their bread?

All those unfortunate persons, I shall be told, would rather beg than be content with a pension of 400 francs. That is possible, and even certain in the case of the majority of them.

But neither the administration nor society need consult them. They have each a duty to fulfil.

The administration should form a list of the really needy and impotent, and of all those who are to be numbered among the castaways of this life. It should secure to all cripples, to all these incapable ones—what? Why, simply what is necessary, and nothing beyond what is necessary. It is its strict duty to prevent any

infirmity from becoming the source of scandalous profit, *abstracted from the money intended for the poor.*

It is the duty of society to bear the expense. It seems to me that society does its duty; it pays in the form of an obligatory tax all that is expected of it, and to the obligatory tax it adds considerable sums, representing millions of francs of private charity.

It is for the administration to organise its work better.

It should in dispensing its relief:

- (1) Relieve the infirm before the healthy;
- (2) Prevent the overlapping of relief.

Is this done at present? No. Go to Nanterre, an establishment that cost more than eight million francs, and where you may admire the 'magnificent staircases and large halls, with partitions of old carved oak.'*

Whom would you find in this palace? Sick people? Yes. Old people? Yes. The helpless? Yes. But besides these three classes of individuals who are in their right place there, you would find fifty to one hundred healthy people, of ages varying from twenty to thirty-five years, whom the administration itself recognises as idlers, worthy of little consideration.

They are men, young and strong. They allege that they are without work. That is enough. They are admitted into the splendid building, with its fine rooms divided by partitions of old carved oak. They are lodged, fed, clothed, and cared for, and in exchange they are subjected to a *pretence* of work.

I say *pretence of work*, I should say *pretence of occupation*. There are sometimes at Nanterre as many as 4,000 boarders, and the total sum paid for their work does not amount to more than 120,000 francs a year for

* This is the official description of it.

the 4,000 boarders. This gives an average of 30 francs per head a year, or of a penny for a day's labour.

It is true that is only an average. But I cannot help observing that, if out of the population of Nanterre there were only a hundred men working in a normal way during six months in the year, their earnings would reach a higher figure than the whole population now receives.

It is further the duty of the Assistance Publique to exercise a wise control over the distribution of its benefits.

I have pointed out in the course of this work the traffic to which the distribution of medicines, bath-tickets, orthopædic apparatus gives rise. They are all sold again, or can be sold again, even an entrance-ticket to a hospital and a certificate of discharge.

There are professional invalids who, even in the central office, as soon as they receive the order for admission into the hospital, sell it to some poor creature whom the authorities have not been able, for want of room, to admit, or to a loafer whom they have had good reason for not admitting, but who, cleverer than the administration, succeeds in this way with the help of twenty sous in obtaining admission into the hospital and passing two or three days there.

And how often it happens that the certificate of discharge from the hospital is abused!

There remains the question of the overlapping of official charities.

Charity offices distribute cards, giving to those who receive them the right to obtain relief to the amount of eight, ten, twenty, and up to thirty francs a month. These cards bear the name and address of the persons entitled—and that is all. A note warns the receiver

that 'all persons who lend this card will be prohibited from receiving any relief from the office.' But experience shows us that the cards are not only lent, but are often sold after the death of the person entitled to them. There are some families who, from father to son, are inscribed in the list of the charity office, and regularly receive monthly relief, whilst drawing at the same time on the funds both of official and private charity.

Would it be impossible to prevent these abuses? Would it be impossible in many cases to have the medicaments used on the spot? Would it be impossible to inscribe on the certificate of discharge from the hospital the ailment of the invalid, so that the certificate could not serve as a passport of infirmity for healthy idlers? Would it be impossible to create, for the purpose of dispensing relief in money as well as in kind, a card of identity, and a central cash office similar to that which I propose at the end of this book for private works of charity? I think not. I think, on the contrary, that by these numerous little reforms in details it would be possible to prevent the abuse of multiplying relief to the same person. It only needs a little good-will to accomplish these reforms.

CHAPTER V.

LEGISLATIVE REFORMS.

HAS the legislator nothing to do to prevent or to suppress mendicity? No man with any knowledge of the subject would think of maintaining this. I have shown in the course of this work that the law is often wrongly applied. But is not the law itself defective, and does it not make it impossible effectually to repress the worst kind of

mendicity, while it tends to deal hardly with the man who is more unfortunate than guilty?

Article 274 of the penal code runs thus: 'Every person who shall be found *begging in a place for which* there exists an organised public establishment for the purpose of preventing mendicity shall be subject to the penalty of three to six months' imprisonment, and shall be, after the expiration of his sentence, taken to the mendicity house of detention.'

Well, I venture to say that this article, in its present form, and especially as now applied, constitutes a gross anomaly. It strikes the unfortunate, whilst its effect upon the guilty is a mere mockery, and—experience has proved it—it has been absolutely inefficacious as regards the evil it is intended to combat. What is meant by the word 'begging' the article does not say. What is meant by the expression 'place for which there exists an organised public establishment for the purpose of preventing mendicity'? Must this establishment be situated in the parish, in the district, or in the department where the person is found begging? This also the Article fails to declare. The text is also mute on the question how long the beggar must stay in the house of detention on coming out of prison. It leaves it to the administration to fix the term of this supplementary detention.

Again, I say such an enactment is an anomaly, and the evil lies in the fact that the offence of 'begging' has not been defined.

'Every person who is found begging . . . shall be punished.'

And what right have they to forbid anyone in distress calling the attention of the public to his condition, and appealing to their goodwill and generosity? If a man be infirm and incapable of earning his bread, or if he be

healthy, but through a chain of circumstances for which he is not responsible has fallen into the utmost destitution, may he not appeal to his fellow creatures? If not, charity would cease to exist.

I am well aware that the code says that it is forbidden to beg in a place *for which* there exists an organised public establishment for the prevention of mendicity. No doubt in the legislators' opinion there ought to be enough of those public establishments to meet all needs, and they should be open to all comers. But is it so in fact? Is there everywhere an institution within reach of the beggar, and has the famous inscription '*pulsanti aperietur*' been marked on its door? Just the reverse is the truth. And it has been said with justice that in France it is easier to obtain a decoration than to get a destitute person admitted into a mendicity institution.*

It is not only excessively difficult to get admission into an institution, but the number of these institutions is extremely limited.

If only the code had said that all persons would be punished who should be found begging in a *parish* in which there existed an establishment open to beggars the severity of the law would have been reasonable. But the code speaks of the *place for which* there exists a public establishment. Thanks to this wording, parishes and even departments forbid mendicity on their territory under the pretext that they have made an arrangement with an institution situated in an adjoining parish, or even department, to receive their beggars.

Shall I give an example? During many years the department of Indre-et-Loire had an arrangement with

* Discussion on the Report of M. le Conseiller Felix upon Mendicity Institutions. Séance de la Société General des prisons du 19 Avril, 1893.

the mendicity institution of Beaugency, which agreed to receive its beggars. In consequence of this agreement Article 274 became applicable in all the parishes of Indre-et-Loire.

Suppose a man to be absolutely destitute. He is incapable of working, or is able-bodied but is without work. This man is dying of starvation. He goes into the street at Tours, and asks for a bit of bread. They stop him and say: 'You are begging in a place for which there is a public establishment intended to prevent mendicity. You therefore come within the terms of Article 274 of the penal code. You will have to undergo three to six months' imprisonment, after which you will be sent to a mendicity house, where you will be detained for one, two, or three months.'

'But,' says the beggar, 'where is this public establishment to which I ought to apply?'

'It is at Beaugency, a distance of eighty-seven kilomètres from here!' And if the unfortunate man, addressing himself to the judge, were to reply: 'Very well; I will try to walk those eighty-seven kilomètres without begging along the road, as that is forbidden,' the kind-hearted judge could not fail to tell him: 'It would be useless, for if you presented yourself at the institution at Beaugency without influential recommendation, they would not receive you there.'

And so they punish a man because he does not apply to the mendicity institution, but they know at the same time that it is practically impossible for him to get there, and that in any case, if he got there, he would find the door closed.

You will ask what should be done. Modify Article 274 of the penal code, and first of all define the offence of mendicity.

The man who is in want, and who from one cause or another is unable to earn his living, commits no offence by asking charity of one who can help him, for, as Beccaria says, 'an offence is only punishable when it might have been avoided.'

But, on the other hand, the man who, having money in his pocket, asks for alms—he who might but will not work, and who seeks to be supported by citizens who are toiling and economizing; he who by his wretched apparel, by means of certificates of discharge from hospitals bought at the public-house, by employing fraudulent devices to inspire belief in the existence of an imaginary situation, gains the pity of the passers-by; he who, after having deserted his wife and children, and drunk at the public-house more money than a poor workman requires to live upon, comes up to you saying that his children are dying of hunger, and that he himself has had nothing to eat for two days—all these persons are swindlers, and should be liable to the penalty due to swindlers.

A man who, under pretence of being an organ-grinder and that his official certificate authorizes him to sing in public establishments and to be accompanied by his children over sixteen years of age, takes his children to the door or into the interior of certain ill-famed establishments which I cannot name—that man commits the crime of inciting minors to debauchery, and should be liable to be condemned to five years' imprisonment.

He who, when there exists a crèche in his neighbourhood where he could place his children, or a school to which he ought to send them, exposes them during whole days together to the inclemency of the weather, causing disease and even death, all the while appearing to love them from the bottom of his heart—that man is an

assassin who ought to be liable to the penalty applicable to assassination. And yet all these crimes are committed, and it is only necessary that they should be accompanied by a little begging for the offender to evade the rigours of the law, and to escape with a few months' imprisonment.

It is necessary, then, to begin by defining the offence of mendicity. It does not consist in holding out the hand in the street, because, as I said before, there are cases in which a man has the right to appeal to the charity of his fellow creatures. *Mendicity consists in asking, with any kind of deceitful device, for relief which is not needed, or which might be procured by honest work.* Hence the necessity, in order effectually to repress mendicity, to have the special police I contend for, so as to establish not the fact of having held out the hand for relief, but the circumstances which in the particular case render the act culpable. When mendicity has been properly defined it ought to be considered as swindling, which allows the application of the penalty of five years' imprisonment, and a fine of from fifty to three thousand francs.

The actual penalty of from three to six months' imprisonment is unjust when applied to the destitute; it is a mockery when it is inflicted upon a professional beggar to whom the prison, especially a prison without isolation, is, during the bad season, equivalent to staying at an inn.

I possess the dossiers of some beggars who have been sentenced to imprisonment fifty to sixty times for begging. In the summer these beggars go for the season to Vichy, Trouville, or Dieppe, and in the winter they get themselves sent back into the most comfortable prison. All their life will be spent at the expense of the tax-

payer, and you would be shocked if you were to calculate what a man has cost society who has been convicted sixty times, and has himself alone set in motion a whole army of police, as well as constables, gendarmes, police-commissioners, bailiffs, magistrates, and prison-warders. And to think that there are beggars who, after having lived in this way by hanging on to the skirts of taxpayers, become themselves transformed one fine day into fund-holders, living on the money they have thus earned.

Is this money really theirs? Had the 96,000 francs of Father Antoine been earned, or obtained by cheating? I am not jurist enough to say whether, when a man is convicted of having procured a fortune for himself by the swindle of begging, it would be possible to confiscate it.

If justice alone were considered, such confiscation would give rise to no difficulty. Books, prohibited arms, funds obtained by gambling, are confiscated in many cases, and, generally speaking, things which have been used in committing an offence, and even the produce of the offence—why should the sums obtained by begging not be confiscated when begging is an offence? That would be a means of restoring to the poor part of the money that has been stolen from them. In any case, if it were decided to punish mendicity, such as I have defined it, with the penalty due to swindling, that penalty would permit the infliction upon the beggar of a fine large enough to make those thieves of the poor disgorge.

When a man becomes mad, and does not possess the necessary resources to pay his keep in an asylum, the State undertakes to pay the expense. But if, while he is detained at Charenton, the madman becomes possessed of an inheritance of any kind, the State lays hands on the inheritance, so as to recoup itself the advance it has made.

The lunatic is an unfortunate man ; the rich beggar is a swindler. Could we not apply the same law to the swindler as we apply to the unfortunate ? Would it be contrary to sound principle, whenever we had to deal with a beggar in possession of a considerable sum, to levy upon that capital all or part of the expense incurred by the State for his detention in a mendicity institution ? I know beggars who have stolen and amassed enough money during their life to be able easily to pay both the expenses of their detention and a fine of from 2,000 to 3,000 francs.

On August 12, 1890, M. Caplot, manager of the mendicity house at Nanterre, received the following letter from one of his pensioners :

‘ SIR,

‘ Be good enough to have pity upon an unfortunate old man who seeks advice from your wisdom and experience.

‘ I have been at Nanterre for a month since leaving La Santé Prison. When I was arrested the following goods belonging to me were seized :

‘ 1. Four shares to bearer of 200 francs each.

‘ 2. A share to bearer of 8,000 francs.

‘ 3. A savings bank book of 2,000 francs.

‘ 4. A bank-note and money to the amount of about 800 francs.

‘ Be good enough, I entreat you, sir, to advise me what steps to take to get possession of this money, which is the result of the labour of all my life, and not the produce of begging.

‘ With my sincere thanks, sir,

‘ M. HENRI.

‘ August 12, 1890.’

I do not know whether this pretty little sum was the produce of mendicity or not ; what is certain is that the man who possessed it begged, and was sentenced for begging. This man is precisely within the category of those to whom under my system the penalty for swindling would be applied, whereas the actual legislation only subjects him to an imprisonment of short duration without any fine.

As matters stand at present, when he has done his month at Nanterre, that beggar will calmly return to the highways, where he will recommence his trade, having first taken care to secure from the registry-office of the prison the money which the Administration has meanwhile carefully husbanded. If the coupons have become due during the man's detention, the cashier of the establishment will have duly cashed the amount for the benefit of the boarder, and this at the expense of the taxpayers. The law relating to the 'sojourn of foreigners in France and to the protection of national labour,' voted by the Chamber of Deputies and inscribed on the orders of the day of the Senate at the very time I am writing these lines, imposes a fine of 200 francs upon all persons who shall knowingly employ a foreigner not furnished with 'a certificate of matriculation,' as well as upon the foreigner who shall not have made the declaration imposed by law.

It provides that the produce of these fines shall go to augment the municipal funds of the commune in which the foreigner resides.

Let us institute a fine to punish mendicity. Let us even provide that in certain defined cases a fine should—to the great advantage of the taxpayers—replace imprisonment ; let us devote the produce of these fines to the charity office of the commune where the beggar was

arrested, and these offices will be the first to help the police in the prosecution of those aristocrats of mendicity who are their worst enemies.

The legislator, after having thus defined and severely punished the frauds of mendicity, ought to make the use of children for begging purposes a special offence.

At a general meeting of the Society for the Protection of Infants, which was held in the large amphitheatre of the Sorbonne, Doctor Rochard, member of the Academy of Medicine, said that out of the 253,000 children under the age of five years who die every year, 100,000 might be saved.

‘We cannot compel birth,’ he exclaimed, ‘but we can prevent death.’

How many amongst these 100,000 children who die early in life are killed, and killed wittingly, by beggars?

The code punishes by solitary imprisonment the woman who, at the peril of her life, and perhaps to avoid dishonour, kills her infant child. But the unnatural mother who, without exposing herself to any suffering, and not for the purpose of avoiding dishonour, but to gain money easily, martyrs a little creature, exposing it to cold, to rain, to snow, to bronchitis, to inflammation of the lungs, and finally sends it into the next world after having inflicted on it a long agony—this woman commits no offence.

She need only hold two pencils or a few pairs of laces in her hand to avoid all interference. She is a beggar, and nothing more.

Well, just as the code makes it a special offence to beg wherever there is a mendicity office, I ask that it should be made one of the gravest offences to beg in the street with children wherever there is a crèche, an asylum, or an establishment of any kind for the purpose of receiving children during the daytime.

The legislator of 1893, without troubling himself to find out what are the resources and needs of each workwoman, has provided that a woman is not to work in a manufactory during the latter period of her pregnancy.

Would it be absurd to ask him to protect the child during the first years of its life, especially when there abound establishments, both public and private, religious and secular, intended for the succour of these children?

Could not the legislator who has forbidden to women and girls night-work which he considers immoral—calling to mind the verse of the poet, '*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*'—forbid to young girls all those little callings which are practised at night at café doors, and are dangerous in a different way from working in factories, and which end by consigning those who practise them to the prison of Saint Lazare?

Why protect those who are able to insist upon their rights, and neglect those who are unable to defend themselves?

In that unlucky Article 274 of the penal code there is another provision which should be repealed. It is that which requires that after the beggar has served his term of imprisonment, he should be detained in a mendicity house.

Instead of condemning a man to three months' imprisonment and three months' detention in a mendicity house, would it not be simpler to condemn him to six months' imprisonment? Why this change of place, this journey? Is there any difference between the régime of the district prison and that of the mendicity house?

Is there any chance of the beggar finding remunerative work at the mendicity house which he failed to find

in the district prison? Will he manage at the house to hoard money? Everybody knows that the savings of a beggar at the end of several months' detention are not worth mentioning. Then what is the use of this journey which costs the State considerable expense without profiting anyone?

At the end of November, 1890, there were at Nanterre 4,293 persons either dwelling or detained there. Of this figure the number of beggars liberated from prison, but detained in the house by virtue of Article 274, amounted to 440. These persons lived at Nanterre from one to three months, according to the decision of the administration. Let us take an average, and suppose they are there for two months. There would then be every two months a convoy of 440 persons travelling at the expense of the taxpayers. A beggar is condemned to three months' imprisonment; he is shut up in the prison of La Santé. There he is washed and clothed; he is installed in a workshop of some kind, and with much trouble they make him serve an apprenticeship to some trade.

As soon as he begins to be accustomed to the house, to his guardians, to his work, straightway he is removed. He is made to give up the prison clothes, which have to be disinfected before passing to another; his name is taken off the gaol register, the account of his work is settled, and the man is driven to the house at Nanterre. There they give him other clothes, which must, in their turn, be disinfected; they draw up a fresh entry in the register; then they attach the beggar to a workshop, and apprentice him to a different work, which he will have to give up at the end of a few weeks.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that with such a system as this, in spite of the zeal of a manager so intelligent and devoted as M. Caplat, the produce of the work at the Nanterre establishment should be nil. What

manufacturer, with such a régime, could obtain better results ?

Whose fault is it, if not that of the law, by virtue of which men who should be serving their five or six years in the same prison are circulating during those five or six years through all the prisons and houses of detention in France ? By doing away with the distinction between detention in mendicity houses and detention in prisons, the incessant journeys would be avoided, as well as those interruptions to work and the great expense incurred in writing, accounting, and disinfecting of clothes, all of which is pure loss.

Are these mere petty economies ? In the establishment at Nanterre they wash 14,000 pairs of sheets a month—336,000 sheets a year !

A deputy for Marseilles said one day in the Chamber of Deputies that one may judge of the degree of civilization of a people by the amount of soap they use. If that formula were correct, the boarders at Nanterre would be the most civilized of men.

The Chamber of Deputies has just passed a law dealing with accidents to workmen. It has proclaimed the principle of trade risk, and provided that all workmen injured whilst working shall have the right to an indemnity, just as a soldier, wounded on the field of battle, has a right to a pension.

By requiring the employer, or rather the industry, to provide for all victims of accidents sustained while working ; by multiplying and subsidizing societies for mutual help intended for the support of the old and the infirm, the legislator will in a large measure diminish the charges that will henceforth burden private charity.

In future most of the injured or crippled will not need to beg their bread, as they will be certain of support.

But, at the same time, let no mistake be made. If legislation does not take the direction of the reforms of which I have traced the broad lines; if private charitable societies do not adopt the proposal I am going to formulate in the last chapter of this book, and which is meant to prevent re-duplication of relief, the number of beggars, cripples, and false workmen out of work will not be diminished. Private charity will continue to give the same number of millions of francs that it gives at present to support the same number of idlers. The blind, deprived of sight through explosion of fire-damp, will rank themselves as blind from birth; the sham one-armed man will make himself out an epileptic; church porches will still be encumbered with beggars; and under the entrance-porches of houses mothers will continue to nurse, or rather to kill, their infants.

When the legislator has modified the articles of the code which deal with mendicity; when he has created the special offences I have pointed out; when he has passed laws relating to the accidents of workmen, unhealthy lodgings, cheap dwellings, societies for mutual help and others, there will still be a great and last reform for him to make; that is to say, to constitute, if not as yet, a Ministry of public and private charity, at least a Direction Générale of public assistance and charity, *having autonomy* and concentrating in its hands all the duties relating to public health, the protection of children, the assistance for the aged, the blind, the idiots and the infirm, for the unfortunate, and those unable to work, and having the power to impose upon almshouses, shelters, and provincial hospitals the regulations now dictated by modern science.

A country which possesses a Ministry for commerce and industry is under an obligation to have an adminis-

tration for the dispensing of public and private charity, charged with the duty of ensuring by equitable measures and by the application of the laws of forethought and economy bread to the old soldiers of agriculture, commerce and industry, and to all those who, after having by their hard labour contributed to the riches of the country, have often received but too small a share of those riches.

We have arrived at an epoch when in order to govern it is no longer sufficient to rely upon the unalterable principles of right. No, it no longer suffices to base law upon justice and liberty. Charity, fraternity, and even generosity, must be introduced.

The immense progress realized in France by those who manage the Assistance Publique, which, thanks to the zeal and devotion of M. Monod, has organized a warfare against epidemics, against unhealthy lodgings, and against mendicity, and has undertaken the rescue of miserable and abandoned children, itself eloquently proves what good might be done in our country if the autonomy were given to that governing body which it has need of, in order to centralize within the same hands all those official works which now belong to different agencies, and which are often counteracting instead of helping one another. It is not a question of substituting administration for personal work, or of interfering with those fruitful initiatives. It is only necessary to stimulate them, to encourage them, to help them at their start by moral, and sometimes by material, support.

There are some places in the land where relief abounds. There are others where it is absolutely wanting. The money spent on the relief of extreme misery, for example, represents in the Seine Inférieure eleven francs two centimes for each hundred inhabitants, and eight centimes for each hundred in the Landes.

What is the reason for these differences in the case of relief furnished by the funds of the ratepayers? Have roads, railways and schools only been constructed in the rich departments in France? On the contrary, have not the rich provinces contributed to pay the expenses of the poor ones? Why should the process be different when it is a question of relieving the destitute? and is it not clear that this bad distribution of funds intended for public assistance is one of the causes of that influx into the towns of so many of the sick and idle who might with less expense be more effectually relieved in their own villages, and who in the towns encumber the hospitals and the prisons?

Let that autonomous administration for beneficence and charity be created, then, if only to take an inventory of these colossal and at times unproductive riches due to the heart, the intelligence, the generosity, and the charity of France, and to prove demonstratively to those who suffer and to those who malign us that 'the French who talk so readily of their vices would have the right to talk a little of their virtues.'*

CHAPTER VI.

REFORM OF THE DOMAIN OF CHARITABLE SOCIETIES.

At length I arrive at the last reform I have to propose, that which will be at the same time the easiest to accomplish and the most fruitful in practical results.

In the course of this work, when seeking the remedy for the evil which we all wish to rectify, I have addressed myself in turns to the public, to the Government, and to the legislator.

* Jules Simon.

To the public I have said : ' Give no more alms in the street.' No doubt many persons will follow my advice, but it will need time before one can succeed in making the masses understand that thoughtless almsgiving, far from relieving distress, promotes begging.

To those who administer the laws I have shown the necessity of modifying its ways and customs. But it is not easy to reform the administration. It is accustomed to criticism. Will it take any notice of that which I have humbly taken the liberty of applying to it?

Of the legislator I demand the revision of several articles of the Penal Code.

I know by experience, since for twenty-two years I have had the honour, in the capacity of secretary, of being present at all the sittings of the Chamber of Deputies, how slow Parliamentary procedure is, and how difficult it is to accomplish the modification of an article of the Penal Code, especially when that modification is suggested by an outsider.

In order to realize the last reform I propose, the object of which is to prevent the accumulation of relief upon individuals, I do not require the help either of the legislator, the administration, or the public. I only want the co-operation of about thirty of the most skilled people, the co-operation of the presidents of the principal charitable works of Paris, whether they be men or women.

The numerous anecdotes I have related in this book, the experiences I have gone through, prove in the most evident way that in Paris there exist thousands of individuals who live plentifully, I may say sumptuously, upon public charity. In order to procure subsidies from the administration or from private sources, it is not of primary importance to be destitute ; it is above all things necessary to be clever.

I have shown how an idle fellow can procure thirty francs a month from the Bureau de Bienfaisance ; can get his rent paid by M. de Rothschild and the House-rent Institution ; can get relief from three different churches, professing to be at the same time Catholic, Protestant, and Jew ; can receive supplies from twenty charitable societies, provide his home with meat, milk, chocolate, linen, furniture, medicaments, books, and flowers ; can travel at the expense of the State, live plentifully without working, and give a comfortable dowry to his daughters from the accumulation of alms extorted from the charity of honest people.

There is no minister of religion, no police commissioner, no administrator for dispensing charity, no chairman of a charitable society, who could not from this point of view cite innumerable conclusive examples. What can be done to prevent this evil which everyone recognises ? By the side of those beggars to whom henceforth assistance by work will be offered there are those poor creatures who cannot or who never could work ; there are fathers burdened with large families ; there are the old and the sick ; there are, in a word, the disinherited of this life, fatally condemned to live completely or partially at the expense of society.

It is for these unfortunate people that all those charitable institutions have been created of which Paris may with good reason be proud.

It is necessary to give these societies power to do as much good as possible, taking care that the relief which they distribute is not an addition to the relief already allowed by other societies.

How is this accumulation of relief upon individuals to be prevented ? Many systems have been tried.

M. Mamoz, whose work is well known, has achieved great progress. He has organized a vast bureau of in-

formation about all the beggars in the capital. The idea would be an excellent one if it could be completely carried out. But a thorough investigation of all the circumstances relating to a beggar is a most difficult thing, and one which requires, on the part of the commissioner making the inquiry, many qualities which it is almost impossible to meet with in a single person.

The commissioner making the inquiry ought to be absolutely honest and impartial; that is a matter of course. He ought to be intelligent, young, active, and indefatigable; he ought to be able to overcome all sense of disgust, for he will have to penetrate into the dirtiest, the lowest, and at times the most dangerous places.

The commissioner making the inquiry must know intimately the life of the Parisian beggar. For him there must be no mysteries in the night-shelters, the hospitals, the hovels, and even the prisons. He must know by heart the manual of charitable works, so as to be able to know at once, when in the presence of a professional beggar, the source of the different objects he sees in the house. He should, by simply inspecting the beggar's lodging, be able to say: 'That is a cradle which has been given you by the Society for the Protection of Infants. That is a blanket which comes from a charitable institution. That is a bottle of condensed milk which you did not buy, but which has been given you by such a dispensary. That is a ticket, a document, a letter, which proves that you are already being helped by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, by the curé, or the Bureau de Bienfaisance.'

The commissioner must, in a word, be able at a single glance to unmask all the tricks and recognise all the frauds.

Where is the ideal inquiry commissioner to be found? He does not exist, he cannot exist; for if it were possible

to find men who, through enthusiasm or love of work, were ready to give themselves up to these minute inquiries, it would be impossible to find a body of functionaries or clerks who would throw into their occupation the necessary zeal, talent, and enthusiasm without which in such a matter no result can be arrived at.

And the inquiry commissioners of M. Mamoz, however carefully chosen, can only be salaried agents.

You ask one of these agents to investigate the case of some beggar living at such a place. How will he proceed? He will go to the address given him and question the concierge, the neighbours, the tradespeople; then he will penetrate into the beggar's abode, and will see that there is no fire in the grate, that the children are half naked, and that everything breathes of want and misery. But what will he do to know whether this scene represents the truth, or if it is merely part of a play? And what reliance can be placed upon the opinion of the concierge, the neighbours, and the tradespeople? You know well that all these people are interested in the beggar receiving as much as possible. There are in Paris only two kinds of concierges, whose amiability is proverbial. They are the beggars' concierges, and those of certain women. Why? Because they are interested in their lodgers' business.

It is very probable, then, that the inquiring commissioner's report will be inexact. But I will go further, and suppose the report to be absolutely according to the truth. It assures me that the beggar about whom I have asked information is worthy of interest. He is, for instance, the father of a large family. Very well, I will send a trifle to this poor father; I will give him his quarter's rent, and tell many of my friends about him. But if, owing to all these recommendations, the beggar receives more relief than ought in justice

to be allowed him—if four, five, six persons pay the same rent that I have myself already paid—how am I to know it?

A few weeks ago a neighbour came to recommend to my notice a woman who, without being exactly destitute, yet wanted some old linen to dress her wounds. The illness with which this woman was afflicted necessitated a large consumption of linen. I let several people and several societies know this fact at different times, and one Sunday I myself took to her abode a parcel of old shirts. ‘We thank you most sincerely,’ they answered me, ‘but through your kind recommendation so many people have helped us that we have no further need of anything; we have plenty of linen.’ These were honest folk—very honest folk—and that is why they answered as they did. But if my charity had been offered to a professional beggar, you may be very sure that the beggar would never have said that they had ‘plenty of linen’ in his house, for he would have turned that linen into money.

Information, therefore, is a step in the right direction, but it cannot solve the problem which may be thus stated—to find a practical means of preventing beggars from abusing the relief given to them.

M. Lefébure created the Central Office of Charitable Works. What is this Central Office of Charitable Works? Is it a means of giving direct assistance? No. ‘It is an institution intended to serve as a link between all charitable works and the public. Centre of study, information, and reference, it is ready to be the intermediary between the want that seeks effectual relief and the charity which seeks to distribute its assistance aright. Its ambition will be to increase tenfold the forces of charity, by creating a common centre for that admirable network of institutions with which the capital is filled—

a heart whose pulsations will carry throughout activity and life.*

Here, again, we find great progress. The central office not only instructs the public as to the existence and working of different charities, but it has succeeded in establishing more charities, thanks to the generosity of different subscribers, and notably M. le Comte de Laubespin. But will this prevent the accumulation of charity upon individuals? Once again, no. And we agree with those who think that if there are so many destitute people without relief, it is not because funds are wanting, but because they are wrongly distributed.

Is it possible to arrive at the exact amount of relief that each needy person receives from charitable societies as a whole? It is not only possible, but is even easy.

It is only necessary to create a Central Office for Private Charitable Works.

I will explain myself.

To my mind, it is not necessary to interfere with private societies; I would, on the contrary, scrupulously respect their absolute autonomy and independence, which is an essential condition of their success. Each society will continue to act as it does to-day—this one attending to Catholics, this one to Protestants, to Jews, or to Freemasons; another to the sick, to the old, to children, or the maimed. Their administrators will manage their funds as they have done hitherto; they will continue to be sole judges of the reasons for which they allow relief of any kind to whoever applies to them. But when they have decided to allow this relief, instead of giving the individual the money, or whatever else is intended for him, they will give him a ticket payable at the *central office*.

* Marquis de Vogué, member of the Institute. Speech made at the general assembly of the institution, May 21, 1892.

This central office will be precisely like a bank. The poor person will come to the cashier provided with his cheque or ticket, and will immediately receive what is due to him. Only the office, before paying, will do two things: it will make sure of the identity of the applicant, and will enter his name for the sum of money or whatever else is given him. In this way each poor person will have his account kept up to date, from which at any moment the money that has been paid him, by no matter what society, can be ascertained.

How will the office satisfy itself as to the identity of the beggar?

It will require the relief order to be on a card which it will itself furnish, just as the Assistance Publique gives out cards for relief. On this card there will be the photograph, and perhaps even the anthropometric description of the bearer, in order to prevent any abuse.

'Do you, then,' it will be said, 'wish the beggar to be treated like a criminal?'

My answer is that I do not see what there can be in the *Bertillon* system to wound anyone. In the passport or gun-license is not the traveller's signature taken, and has anyone ever complained that his dignity was assailed if they noted the shape of his nose or the colour of his eyes?

That is all M. Bertillon does. Instead of indicating the shape of the nose he marks its length, and for a portrait that has often little resemblance to its subject, he substitutes a photograph; instead of a description that might hurt the feelings, he puts a number that has the advantage of being mathematically exact.

The beggar, therefore, could have nothing to complain of if before giving him relief the particulars referred to were required.

When a man wishes not a gift but a loan of a

certain amount, and offers as guarantee a mortgage on his house, is he not bound to prove that the house belongs to him, to show his family papers, his marriage contract, and it may even happen at times, to give details that he would have preferred not to reveal to anyone? And would this same man when he asks for money, giving warning beforehand that he will not pay it back, feel humiliated because he is asked to prove that he is the man for whom the sum is intended? Really such an objection cannot be seriously urged.

Let us suppose now that my central office is established. I have to pay the cheques and the orders drawn upon me, whether by assistance societies or by charitable persons. Of course, I do not play the part either of M. Mamoz or of M. Lefébure, nor that of the managers of societies for assistance by work. I make no investigations; I obtain no information; I give no advice; I supply no work; I am content to pay on account of my correspondents. But is it not quite clear to all that my office-book will be the best, the most accurate, the truest and the most complete of all sources of information?

A man calls at my office with a ticket for twenty francs, which has been given him by the society for paying rents. I pay it, and on his card, which I retain, I write this sum of twenty francs. The next day he comes back with a cheque for twenty francs from Madame Carnot or from M. de Rothschild, with a ticket for clothing from M. Jules Simon, with a cheque for thirty francs from Baron Schickler. I again pay it, unless Madame Carnot, M. Schickler, Jules Simon, or Rothschild, knowing the character of my office, have given me the order to pay conditionally—and you can guess what this condition is; it may be worded thus: ‘Pay, unless the state of the beggar’s account proves that I have been mistaken.’

It will be seen at once that my system is of the simplest character, and its efficacy would be absolute if all societies came to me. And why should they not come? Does the proposal I make entail any expense upon them? No; it allows them, on the contrary, to realize a sensible economy by combining together, so as to have only one cashier.

This economy would become considerable if, besides combining together in order to have only one cashier, they combined together so as to have only one establishment, situated in the centre of Paris, and with all the conditions desirable in the case of an institution of that kind.

During the ten years that I have been studying this question, I have looked at the problem from every point of view, and in its smallest details. I dream of the creation in Paris of something analogous to the Institute of Literary Societies. In this Institute every charitable society would have its office and its clerk, but all the work that could be done in common would be centralized.

The central office, which would pay the expenses, could take the receipts; the library and the records could be used by every society, which, instead of calling together their adherents at great expense, at one time at the Hôtel Continental, at another at the Hôtel du Louvre, would receive them instead at the Central Institute of Charitable Societies. Take the balance-sheet of private societies which exist in Paris, look there for the sum that each of them is obliged to spend in rent, firing, lighting, its office expenses, its general meetings, its secretariat, and you will soon be persuaded that by adopting my system it would be possible, with much less expense, to create the institution, at once magnificent and practicable, which I have seen in my dreams, and which will, I hope, shortly become a reality.

I call upon all who are willing to help me ; I appeal to the charitable societies in Paris, whether religious or secular. By combining together none of them will lose an atom of their independence, and all will realize a considerable saving, and will prevent, through the action of the central office, that accumulation of relief on individuals which is their ruin.

Lastly, I appeal to women, who in matters of charity know so well how to ally the feelings with practical good sense.

Lamartine said that at the source of all great works there is a woman. The work which I have in view is a great one ; I call upon French women to help it forward.

I am persuaded that this appeal will be listened to, and then, thanks to the union of all our efforts, everyone may boast of having striven for the realization of that great scheme for humanity which as much as two centuries ago Louis XIV. dreamt of accomplishing, when he wrote in his 'Instructions au Dauphin' :

'If God gives me grace to put into execution all I have in my mind, I will try to bring about a state of things in which I do not say there shall no longer be in all my kingdom either poor or rich (for fortune, industry, and intellect will for ever leave this distinction between men), but at least there shall no longer be seen either indigence or mendicity—I mean persons, however wretched they may be, who cannot be sure of subsistence, either by their labour or by systematic and well-regulated relief.'

THE END.

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